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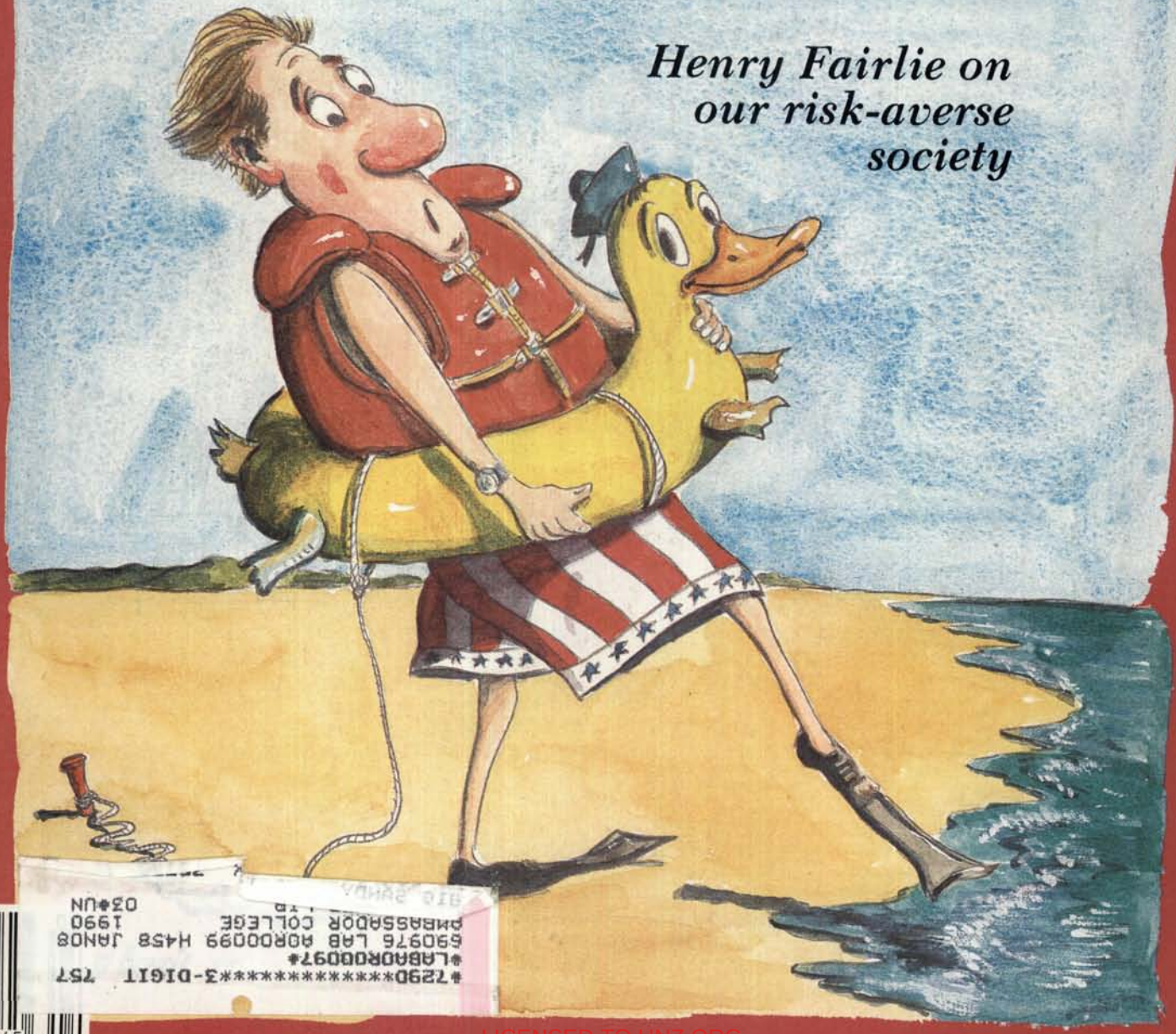

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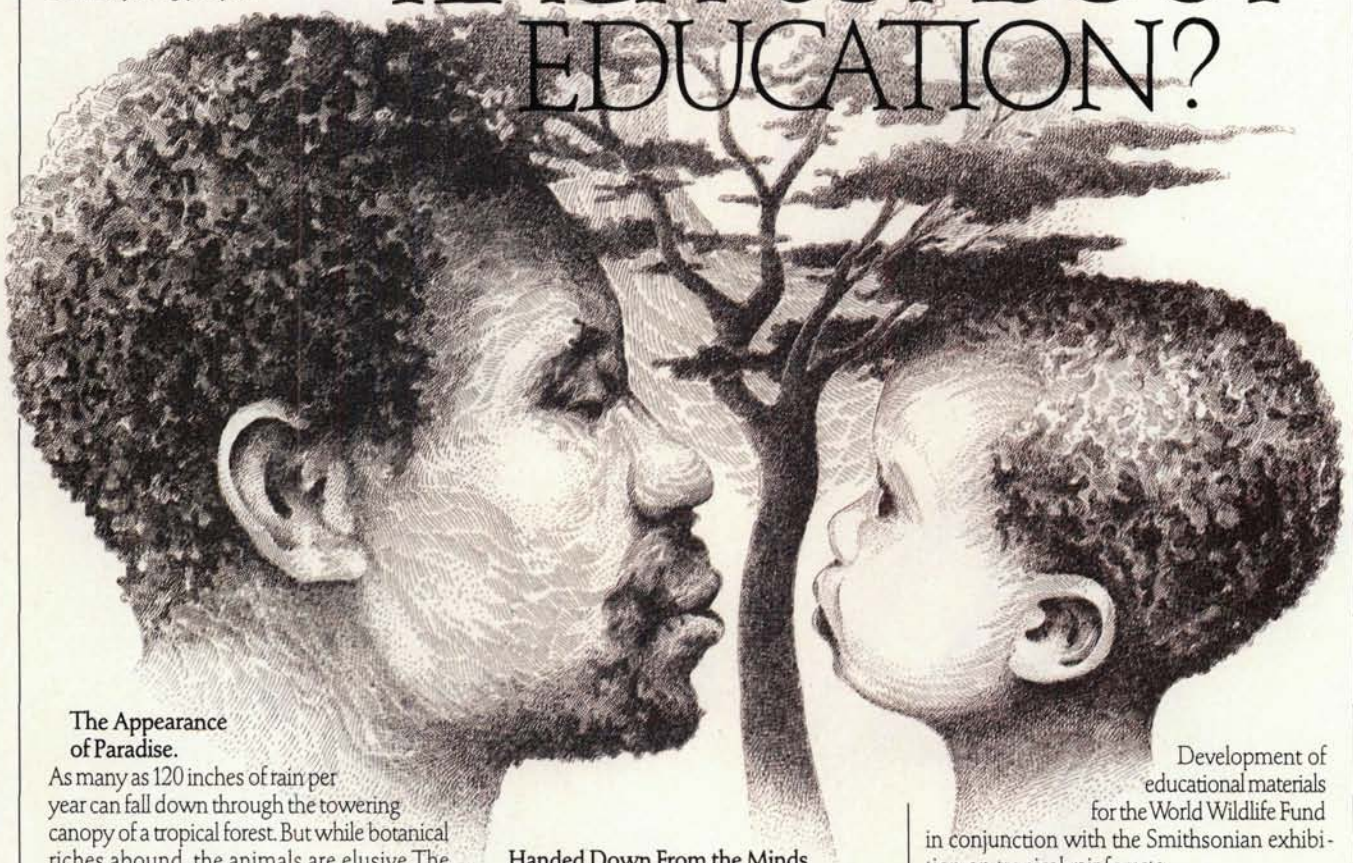

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,862

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FROM WASHINGTON

THE NEW MATH

Editor's note: this column was written by Robert Wright.

For a man whose main career accomplishment is the number of important hands he's shaken, George Bush did a remarkably bad job of shaking Mikhail Gorbachev's hand during the December mini-summit. Standing next to President Reagan on Governors Island, Bush waited nervously for Gorbachev's eye to fall on him and then extended his hand, scrunched his head down deferentially, and smiled ingratiatingly. For a moment our next president looked like a shy, skinny-legged girl at the senior prom who never dreamed she'd find herself talking to a real football hero. All told, the performance did not inspire faith in Bush's ability to represent American interests forcefully in the coming years.

For that reason, James Baker will come in handy as secretary of state. Baker not only has an eye-to-eye handshake; he is a competent bargainer and, above all, has a sure sense for public relations, which has been lacking in U.S foreign policy. For the past few years, a Communist bureaucrat with an unsightly birthmark has consistently outperformed a handsome Hollywood actor on the stage of world opinion. It's time to undo the damage. And who better for that job than Baker, the man who has turned smelling like a rose into a job description? All he has to do is make America look as upstanding and selfless as he always comes off looking.

Some people may be frightened by the prospect of a secretary of state whose image-consciousness equals Gorbachev's. Just imagine the two nations locked in a vicious duel of boundless generosity, each trying to look more magnanimous than the other. Gorbachev will announce another troop cut, and Baker will announce the end of Star Wars research. Gorbachev will counter by cutting Cuba's lifeline, and Baker will renounce all future aid for the *contras*, boldly declaring Nicaragua a permanent Soviet client. An argument will then ensue over who doesn't get control of El Salvador.

Come to think of it, maybe this wouldn't be such a bad idea. Even aside from the p.r. value of magnanimity, all of these "concessions" are arguably in the interests of the nation doing the conceding. Star Wars costs us money. Cuba costs them money. The *contras* cost us money. The Sandinistas cost them money. And so on.

Of course, all of this assumes a post-cold-war calculus. So long as the cold war is still on—so long as we suspect the Soviets of deeply wanting to bury us—then spending money on arms and client states can make sense. But as soon as we place long-term trust in the Soviet Union, the balance sheets do a one-eighty: assets become liabilities, and the dominos start falling in reverse.

So which accounting system should we use during the next few years of twilight, while it's still unclear whether the cold war is really over? It's probably premature to adopt a post-cold-war system, but on the other hand, the pre-cold-war system is rapidly obsolescing, and beginning to muddy our thinking. Just look at the way American analysts evaluated Gorbachev's U.N. speech. The troop cuts he announced were endlessly described as a unilateral "concession." A concession? Something that saves a nation tons of money, boosts its international stature, and doesn't raise by more than one iota its vulnerability to attack? With concessions like that, who needs demands?

This misuse of the term lends itself to various kinds of abuse. On the most naive fringes of the left wing, Gorbachev's "concession" was depicted as evidence that he's an altruist on par with Mother Teresa. On the right wing, the abuse was more subtle and more insidious.

First, conservatives set about trying to figure out what malicious subterranean motives lay beneath the unilateral troop cut. After all, enemies don't make "concessions" unless there's something up their sleeve. Then, having discovered the benefits of the troop cuts to the Soviet economy, these conservatives claimed to have found the smoking gun—proof that Gorbachev isn't interested in global harmony after all. In short, right-wingers adopted the naive left-winger as straw man and then destroyed it by proving that Gorbachev isn't Mother Teresa, but rather (shock!) a politician pursuing national self-interest.

What the right seems not to appreciate fully is that, though Gorbachev is clearly pursuing his nation's self-interest, he is doing it by a post-cold-war calculus. And adopting a post-cold-war calculus—making "concessions" for their own sake—suggests not only that you don't suspect your adversary of harboring global designs, but that you don't harbor them yourself. In the long run, troop cuts (and other liability-cutting, such as losing Afghanistan) are in the Soviet interest only to the extent that Soviet leaders are willing to give up on world domination and take the idea of coexistence seriously.

Obviously, this is not a profound point. It is only worth making because so many right-wingers implicitly deny it. But deep down, even they must recognize its truth. Just imagine if Gorbachev had been talking global harmony over the past few years without any accompanying changes in foreign policy. Conservatives would surely be demanding that, if he really seeks peaceful coexistence, he prove it by getting out of Afghanistan and cutting overall troop strength. But now that he's doing those things, they're finding in them evidence that he doesn't genuinely seek peaceful coexistence.

Granted, Gorbachev hasn't made enough "concessions" to convince anyone that the Soviet Union is permanently locked into a post-cold-war calculus and therefore has irreversibly reformed its ambitions. And, granted, many of the right-wing caveats therefore have merit: we should slide into our own post-cold-war calculus gradually, warily, etc., etc.

But let's not caricature the position of those who hold out some hope for the world. Our guarded optimism isn't based on the belief that Gorbachev is a saint of a guy. It's based on the hope that he's a rational man, and understands that the cold war is futile, that world domination is beyond the reach of any nation (especially one with an economic system as unproductive as communism), and that if both superpowers truly understand this, then helping themselves can be synonymous with helping each other. This hope may turn out to be naive, but at least it has this much going for it: it rests on a faith in human reason, not human goodness. □

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FULL DISCLOSURE

To the editors:

Jeffrey Sachs's article on "Baker's Bank Bailout" (November 14) might have been easier to follow if you had noted that he is a paid consultant to Bolivia, where he has preached his sermon of "just ignore your legally contracted debts to the world's lenders," and has actively peddled his services to Brazil and Argentina. Bolivia has repudiated its debt and, largely because it is a small player in the world's economy, has gotten away with it. Brazil's costly experiment with its unilateral moratorium shows the folly of such action in a larger, more modern economy.

Sachs should recognize that his debt repudiation plan for Bolivia has cost U.S. taxpayers many times what all the bridge loans and contributions to the World Bank's capital have cost. Writing off several hundred million dollars of loans to Bolivia has reduced U.S. banks' profits by an equal amount, meaning tens of millions in forgone taxes to the IRS. On the other hand, bridge loans, which have all been repaid as agreed up to now, and contributions to the World Bank's capital (which Sachs must know are funded at only three percent of the committed amount) haven't cost the taxpayers a single dollar.

James Baker's strategy has averted a major blow-up in the world's financial system, and in the few countries where genuine domestic readjustment has taken place, the debt has been reduced and the national economies have grown. Those countries following the siren song of advisers like Sachs will continue outside the world's economic mainstream well into the next century, pariahs who renounced the "bizarre" custom of honoring their debts.

RICHARD L. HUBER
New York, New York

Jeffrey Sachs replies:

Mr. Huber's letter might have been easier to follow if he had explained that he was until recently a senior executive at Citicorp, with a heavy involvement in Latin America, and is now a senior executive at Chase Manhattan Bank. But his hypocrisy doesn't account for his reckless disregard of the facts.

As a professor of economics at Harvard University, I have had the opportunity to work with the governments of Bolivia and other countries as an adviser for the United Nations Development Program. Bolivia in 1985 was suffering from one of the worst hyperinflations in world history, partly as the fallout of its crushing debt burden. A fragile democratic government was grappling with a debt inherited from military governments that had been given access to credits from Citicorp and other banks. I did not preach default: the preceding government had been in default for 16 months before I arrived. Instead, I helped the incoming Bolivian government to design the first steps *out* of default, with a debt-reduction mechanism blessed by the U.S. government and supervised by the International Monetary Fund. The plan has been instrumental in halting hyperinflation and restoring democratic stability.

Moreover, I have never asked for nor received a penny from Argentina or Brazil, and have turned down lucrative consulting arrangements with investment banks in those countries in order to maintain my academic independence.

Huber should recognize that it is not my "debt repudiation plan," but his bank's questionable loans, that are costing the taxpayers money. And it will be a lot cheaper to recognize those losses now (with the Treasury losing around 15 or 20 percent in forgone taxes) than to use taxpayer money to make loans to the debtor countries so they can pay interest to the banks (thereby costing the taxpayer up to 100 percent of the loss). It is not enough to say that the taxpayers' bailout of the banks hasn't cost anything *so far*. The costs can be kept well hidden from the taxpayer until the losses are finally acknowledged.

CAMPUS CAPERS

To the editors:

Contrary to Morton M. Kondracke's article ("The Dartmouth Wars," December 12), the Dartmouth administration is after conservatives. One week after prominent left-wing, tampon-throwing campus feminists received threatening letters, the college hired forensics experts and got the local police in on the investigation. But 11 months have passed since I filed two harassment reports with the college concerning members of the Dartmouth Afro-American Society. I have yet to receive any answer, even though names were named and there were witnesses. The Afro-American Society at Dartmouth intimidates blacks like me who write for the *Dartmouth Review*, with the tacit blessings of the Dartmouth administration.

K. CHRISTOPHER PRITCHETT
New York, New York

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke warmed the battered hearts of those who love Dartmouth and resent its abuse by the far right. But he didn't mention a key fact in the controversy. Dartmouth has an established procedure, described in the student handbook, for students who want to complain about a professor. That procedure involves going through the office of the Dean of the Faculty or the Dean of Students, or both. One has to ask why the editors of the *Dartmouth Review* chose to ignore the established process in favor of a classroom confrontation with the professor they had singled out for disdain.

NARDI REEDER CAMPION
Hanover, New Hampshire

To the editors:

Now let me get this straight: three *Dartmouth Review* editors, who were university students, had the audacity to: (1) write a "devastating exposé" of an inept professor's lecture; (2) enter that professor's lecture hall the day after publication in hopes of provoking a response; (3) enter the hall foreseeing that the *professor* might be violent; (4) "repeatedly take his picture at close range with a" (gasp) "flash camera"; (5) tape-record the whole event, and for this they were suspended! Since when was being an obnoxious college student/reporter grounds for 18-month and six-month suspensions? Has Dartmouth suspended any left-wing "out-of-control brats" lately?

ANDREW SIMONS
Denver, Colorado

To the editors:

I am pleased that Morton Kondracke is disgusted with the actions of the brats at the *Dartmouth Review*. On one score, however, he gives the journal too much credit. He praises its "exposure" of the official distribution of a safe-sex kit on campus whose written component was, admittedly, rather disgusting. But both he and the *Review* neglected to mention

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JANUARY 23, 1989

WAIVING THE FLAG

Those of us who found George Bush's flag-waving presidential campaign a bit nauseating were consoled by the knowledge that it would come to an end. He would impugn Michael Dukakis's patriotism for a few months, tug shamelessly on the nation's heartstrings, and then, come early November, it would all be over, one way or the other. We didn't expect a President Bush to convert demagoguery into legislation, by, say, proposing a law mandating rituals of respect for the flag. And we still don't. But some of the issues Bush cynically raised last fall may live on by other means. Whether coincidentally or not, the Supreme Court has decided to examine anew a question that was thought to have been virtually settled: whether the government has the power to punish disrespect for the flag—specifically, burning it.

The case derives from the presidential election before this one. On August 22, 1984, Gregory Lee Johnson was arrested during the Republican National Convention in Dallas for setting fire to an American flag at a rally in front of city hall. At the trial he was represented by—who else?—an ACLU lawyer. Johnson was convicted of violating an obscure Texas statute—Desecration of Venerated Object—that makes it a crime to desecrate churches, grave stones, monuments, or any state or national flag. "Desecrate" is defined as damaging the object with knowledge that someone else is likely to be seriously offended. For the crime of seriously offending a bystander, Johnson got a year in jail and a $2,000 fine. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals held that the conviction violated the First Amendment, and the state appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the past 20 years, the Court has decided a number of flag desecration cases, and has always overturned the convictions. But it has done so with narrow rulings; it has never definitively decided whether flag burning can be banned. And William Rehnquist, now chief justice, has dissented in all such cases. The decision to hear the *Johnson* case may be a sign that the Court is coming around to his view. That would be unfortunate.

It is fairly widely accepted that burning the flag is a form of speech. Displaying the Red flag, wearing a swastika, wearing an arm band, taping a peace symbol on the American flag—all have been classified by the Supreme Court as speech protected by the First Amendment. It is no wonder that, during the *Johnson* case, the government conceded that burning the flag is a form of speech, too. Indeed, the entire point of the prosecution was that Johnson had conveyed an offensive idea, contempt for the United States.

For some First Amendment absolutists, this would be enough to settle the case. We don't go that far; we'll concede that even though Johnson was engaged in "speech," the government might still have been right to intervene, given a "clear and present danger" or some other conventionally accepted justification. But neither of the two justifications claimed by the government comes close to being strong enough by accepted First Amendment standards.

The government's first claim is that the statute is necessary to prevent violence. The idea is that flag burning could cause a riot. Possible, but unlikely. There have, lamentably, been many flags burned since the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, but we don't recall any major riots resulting. Besides, it's wrong in principle to allow the state to censor speech just because listeners might attack the speaker. The boundaries of free speech should not be determined by the sensibilities of the most intolerant and violent members of the community. Even in cases where a speaker has tried to incite a crowd to violence, the Court has been justifiably reluctant to allow prosecution.

Anyway, there is no evidence in the *Johnson* case that burning the flag threatened the peace. So far as the record shows, the only member of the audience who reacted dramatically took a much more constructive step: he swept up the ashes, took them home, and buried them in his backyard.

Besides its interest in preventing violence, the government argues that it also has an interest in "preserving the flag as a symbol of national unity." This justification has a nice sound to it, but its meaning is a bit obscure. Unlike the bald eagle, another symbol of national unity, the flag is not an endangered species, so why is it in need of preservation?

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Some judicial opinions (including dissenting opinions by Rehnquist) suggest that what needs preserving is not the flag itself but its utility as a symbol of unity. Thus, the government may have an interest in preventing the flag from being appropriated for some political platform or commercial promotion, just as a corporation has an interest in preventing misuse of its logo. But this doesn't have much to do with flag burning. It is hardly likely that anyone in the audience thought that Johnson was a representative of the federal government or that the flag was a symbol for his political group, the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade. While previous Supreme Court decisions haven't finally resolved the flag-burning issue, the Court has made it clear that destroying the flag doesn't infringe on the government's "trademark."

Actually, if anyone should be prosecuted for misappropriating the government's trademark, it is George Bush. It was Bush, not Johnson, who tried to use the flag as a symbol for his political clique rather than the nation as a whole, as if it were a flag only for Republicans. In wrapping himself in the flag, he diminished it as a symbol of our national unity and converted it into an instrument of divisiveness.

All this talk of government interests is ultimately beside the point. No one really wants to prosecute flag burners to protect the government's trademark or to guard the Gregory Johnsons of this world from the righteous wrath of patriotic onlookers. The real reason is simply that burning the flag is an abomination, an affront to the country we love and those who have died to raise the flag at Iwo Jima and other battlegrounds.

We share this revulsion, but we don't believe that it justifies suppressing what is, after all, a form of free speech. Anyone can tolerate polite dissent. As Justice Holmes once said, the real test is our willingness to tolerate "the expression of opinions that we loathe." The reasons for tolerating speech we find abhorrent are familiar liberal staples: the slope is too slippery; once offensiveness becomes the test for suppression, it is hard to find a logical stopping point. As Rehnquist himself said in the *Hustler* case last year, " 'Outrageousness' in the area of political and social discourse has an inherent subjectiveness about it which would allow a jury to impose liability on the basis of the jurors' tastes or views, or perhaps on the basis of their dislike of a particular expression."

What Michael Dukakis should have said in response to George Bush's demagogic use of the American flag is this: "Of course I love the flag. Of course I pledge allegiance to it. Of course I want to see every American pledge allegiance to it. But the whole point of America is that such pledges should always be a matter of choice. Patriotism in this nation—unlike in the Soviet Union—has always been a grass-roots thing, something that bubbles up from the bottom rather than being imposed from the top. And if that ever changes, then I'll no longer be so enthusiastic about pledging allegiance to the flag." Similarly, an American flag that couldn't be openly burned would be a flag less worthy of allegiance.

NOTEBOOK

□ GLOBAL WRAP-UP: When *Time* ran its cover story on the Planet of the Year, it featured a 16-inch globe wrapped in polyethylene by the "environmental sculptor" Christo as "a fitting symbol of earth's vulnerability to man's reckless ways." Surely the earth will feel a little less vulnerable once Christo retires. As *Time* went on to note, one big problem facing the environment is disposal of non-biodegradable plastic products. The polyethylene used to produce the art for *Time*'s cover won't decay for centuries. That's also true of the almost ten million square feet of nylon and plastic fibers that Christo has employed in some of his more recent creations. *Ars longa, vita brevis.*

□ MIKE, WE HARDLY KNEW YE: Michael Dukakis was never one to take advice. Just before he got in that tank last fall, two aides warned him not to put on the helmet. He ignored them, and you know the rest. Now he's rashly announced that he won't seek re-election as Massachusetts governor in 1990. This was a double blunder. First, his stated rationale was that this will allow him to work up a solution to the state's budget deficit he helped create. The opposite is true. This all but erases his role in the budget crisis. The legislature is free to ignore Dukakis, a guy most Massachusetts legislators weren't especially fond of anyway. Second, he didn't rule out a presidential bid in 1992. He should. After losing ignominiously to George Bush last fall, he has only one base left in the Democratic Party: Massachusetts. Now that's gone. Dukakis may harbor illusions about a return engagement with George Bush in 1992. No other Democrats do.

□ THE SHOVEL GAP: "The Soviet Union has a nationwide, long-standing, well-organized and funded civil defense program under military control . . ." begins a 1988 pamphlet issued by the U.S. Office of Civil Defense. That must be news to the Armenians, whose post-earthquake agony has been prolonged by a botched relief effort. For years hard-liners in the United States have posited the existence of a massive Soviet civil defense effort, citing it as yet more proof that the Soviets were both prepared and willing to withstand a nuclear exchange. The corollary to their argument, of course, is that we should beef up our own civil defense effort or, better yet, our own retaliatory forces. Maybe, maybe not. But the chaos in Armenia makes the slick reports like the Department of Defense's *Soviet Military Power*—which devotes three pages to descriptions and fanciful sketches of Soviet underground railways and shelters—that much harder to swallow.

□ HOFMEKLER'S PEOPLE: Ed Meese as Miss Piggy. Lee Iacocca as Bruce Springsteen. Yasir Arafat as Botticelli's Venus. TNR is pleased to announce that these and other remark-

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able works by Ori Hofmekler, whose portraits have frequently graced our cover, will be featured in a show at the Ernst Alexander Gallery in Georgetown from January 10 through February 20.

The Republican realignment quest.

DREAM ON

THE 1980s have been kind to Ronald Reagan and George Bush, but not to the Republican Party. When Reagan swept into Washington in January 1981, Republicans controlled the Senate with 53 seats and held 192 House seats. Now they're down to 46 Senate seats and 175 in the House. At the state level, the GOP hasn't fared much better. Republicans held 23 governorships in 1981 and hold the same number now. They had 2,992 state legislative seats (or nearly 40 percent of all seats) back then and have 2,922 now (closer to 39 percent). In 1981 Republicans controlled 34 state legislative chambers. Now they've only got 29. They're also down from 14 to eight in the number of states in which they control both houses of the legislature.

I could go on, but the point should be clear. Republicans aren't the majority party. The partisan realignment that was supposed to make them the dominant force in American politics by the end of the 1980s has barely materialized. Political realignments are supposed to work from the top down. But this one has worked only at the top. Republicans have a leg up on winning the presidency. They've won five of the last six races. Voting Republican in presidential elections is now the habit of many independents and Democrats, and of course nearly all Republicans. "The normal presidential majority these days is Republican," says William Schneider of the American Enterprise Institute.

But there's been little trickle-down effect. My theory is that Reagan is to blame. He's been too successful. Year after year of peace and prosperity has anesthetized voters into satisfaction with the status quo. So they vote for incumbents. This allowed Reagan to win re-election in 1984 and Bush to succeed him last year. But it also helped Democrats in Congress and in state and local races, where they've been dominant for decades. In the prosperous 1980s, it was impossible for Republicans to whip up national antipathy toward incumbent Democrats. In fact, the opposite occurred in the Senate, where Republicans lost control in 1986. The off-year electorate, it turns out, is more Democratic than the presidential-year electorate. There are fewer casual voters, who tended to vote Republican in the 1980s.

Schneider's theory is that voters have different concerns when voting for a president than for a senator, representative, or governor. "The higher the office, the more ideology matters," he says. "The more ideology matters, the worse Democrats do. And at the presidential level, questions of ideology, vision, values always matter." Presidential campaigns concentrate on foreign affairs and social policy, the most "ideologically divisive" issues. They are also the ones on which conservative Republicans like Reagan and Bush reflect majority sentiment in the country. But races for lower office are usually focused on economic protection and competence. "People still look to the Democratic Party for economic protection," Schneider says. Democrats are also more competent at dishing out government services. "Competence is all that's required of a governor or a congressman," he says.

Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia has another theory: realignment is impossible "in an age when people don't care about party labels." In the 1930s millions of voters moved from the GOP to the Democratic Party. In the 1980s millions soured on the Democratic Party but became swing voters, not Republicans. Now they're up for grabs in each election. The only place the breakdown of parties has overwhelmingly helped Republicans is the South. "There are few places left where a Republican cannot win an open seat under the right circumstances," Sabato says. "There used to be a lot of places." Republicans can't claim credit for this. It's the result of "the decline of the party label, not Reagan's success or Republican success," says Sabato. Southerners just aren't knee-jerk Democrats anymore. But they haven't become knee-jerk Republicans.

Republicans worked obsessively to realign the House. All their effort was in vain. The 175 Republicans who won in 1988 was the lowest number this century for a year when a Republican president was elected. Democratic strength in the House, 260 seats, is now above the post-World War II average of 253. Only two Democratic incumbents were ousted, Ferdinand St Germain of Rhode Island and Bill Chappell of Florida, both of whom were caught up in scandals. Few Democrats faced strong challenges, and 55 had no Republican opposition at all.

"The safest job in America, other than a tenured college professor, is being a member of the House of Representatives," says Lee Atwater, the new Republican national chairman. "That benefits the Democrats." For Republicans to capture the House, says GOP Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota, "you'd need to have a protracted political struggle between the parties over an issue the American people care about." That happened in the 1930s over the economic issue. But in the 1980s there have only been skirmishes—on taxes, domestic spending, arms control, Nicaragua—followed by consensus. To take over, "you'd also need fair redistricting," Weber says. "You'd need a party that's on the offensive on the domestic agenda. You'd probably need some campaign finance reform to equalize the advantages."

Republicans once had the advantage in money, but no more. Democratic incumbents hog the contributions from political action committees. Brooks Jackson of the *Wall Street Journal* found that PACS gave $44.9 million to Democratic incumbents in the House in 1987 and 1988, but only $1.4 million to their Republican challengers. Republican

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incumbents got $24.3 million, their challengers $5.7 million. The most striking example of an incumbent's power to command PAC money came in Indiana, where a former official of the state realtors' organization got $1,000 from the realtors' PAC. The Democratic incumbent got $10,000. But even if PAC donations were banned, as some Republicans now are urging, Republicans wouldn't take the House. After all, they didn't when they gobbled up most of the money.

For all their frustrations in the 1980s, Republicans are amazingly optimistic about realignment in the 1990s. They point to the tilt of young voters to the GOP, while folks over 60 are more Democratic. In ABC News polling, voters under 25 years went for Bush over Dukakis by 52 percent to 47 percent. That was down from Reagan's 59 to 40 percent lead over Walter Mondale in 1984, but still encouraging. "A big part of the core Democratic constituency will be dying," says Republican consultant Todd Domke, and at the same time the younger folks, casual about going to the polls now, will hit their prime voting years. That sounds great, except the young voters may not be partisan Republicans. In 1986 the 18-to-24 crowd voted 56 percent to 44 percent for Democratic House candidates.

Reapportionment may help Republicans in the 1990s, but then again it may not. It didn't in the 1980s. Atwater has a different scheme, "outreach." If the GOP can get 20 percent of the black vote, 30 to 35 percent of the Hispanics, and 60 to 70 percent of Asians, "that affects sea level," he says. It's also a pipe dream. The irony is that Republicans really know the path to realignment, only they won't take it. All they need is another failed Democratic president to run against.

FRED BARNES

Jesse renames American blacks.

JUST SAY AFRO

JESSE JACKSON recently declared that he and other members of his race should henceforth be called "African-Americans." If this new label sticks, it will be the first time in U.S. history that an ethnic leader has single-handedly changed the name commonly applied to his or her group.

The Rev. Jackson is entitled to be called whatever he wants, and far be it from a white scholar to tell him what that should be. But his curious rationale for renaming his group raises some historical issues worth exploring. "Just as we were colored, but were not that," he explains, "and then Negro, but not that, to be called black is just as baseless." That might provoke some disagreement among Jackson's predecessors, whose shifting semantic preferences are reflected in such titles as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and the Black Students Association. If we insist on the right of people to define themselves, as we properly do, surely that right extends to people in the past.

JACKSON STRESSES "we were called," rather than "we called ourselves," implying that earlier racial terms were all imposed upon his race by its oppressors. It is true that no group in American history has been subjected to so many demeaning and vicious labels. And it is also true that the first terms applied to the group that have survived in the historical record were devised by whites; it was a crime for slaves to learn to read and write, and thus they were unable to leave any written evidence about their preferences in the matter. But the shifts from "colored" to "Negro" to "black" in the years since Emancipation didn't happen because whites were eager to find a less demeaning term. These changes in usage emerged from within the group and then won gradual and often grudging acceptance in the larger society. When the NAACP was formed in 1909, "colored" was still the preferred term. Soon there was a shift to "Negro"—the word for "black" in Spanish and Portuguese. It eventually caught on in the white world, but until the 1930s was usually printed as the lower-cased "negro" despite black objections. When the *New York Times* announced on March 7, 1930, that it would henceforth capitalize "Negro," the black press greeted the news with jubilation. Yet not all blacks were happy with the change. In 1937 the debate was still lively enough for the eminent black scholar Kelly Miller to write an essay, "Negroes or Colored People?" in *Opportunity*, the journal of the National Urban League. The subsequent transmutation of "Negroes" into "blacks" in the past two decades was likewise the product of forces indigenous to the black community, the Black Power movement in particular. These earlier wars over words of self-reference were of great symbolic significance, and shouldn't be dismissed with a casual "we were called."

Shifts in terminology have been an integral part of the struggle for black liberation in this nation, and "black" may soon give way to yet another label. Jackson argues that "African-American" is preferable to other terms because it refers to "some land base, some historical cultural base," and thus has "cultural integrity." But other well-established American ethnic groups have not found reference to a homeland to be essential. "Jew" has no geographic referent; by Jackson's logic Jews should be known as "Palestinian-Americans." It is also doubtful that many people understand the "land base" alluded to in "Chicano" (derived from *mejicano*) or "Hispanic." A new synonym for the latter now coming into fashion among the politically correct on campus—"Latino"—also fails this test. But even if one grants this criterion, why did Jackson opt for a new six-syllable term and pass over a more graceful five-syllable one that is familiar and refers equally clearly to a "land base"? Most of our colleges

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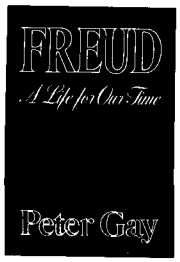

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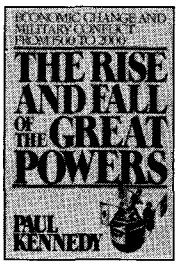

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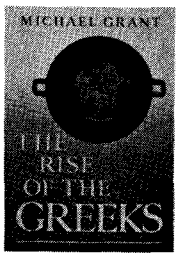

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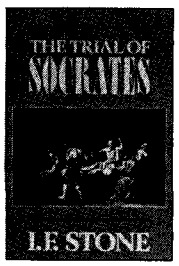

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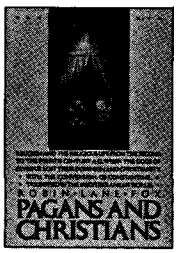

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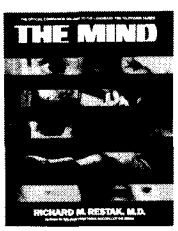

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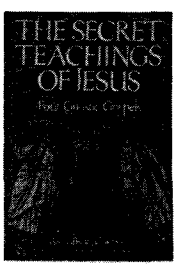

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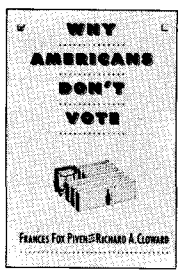

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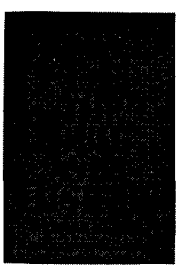

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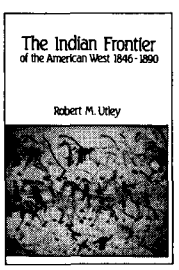

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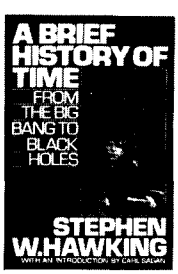

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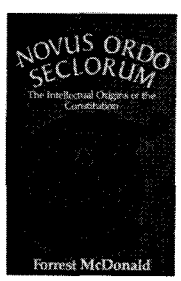

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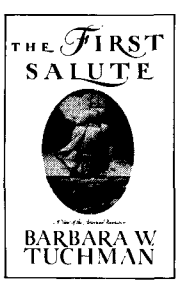

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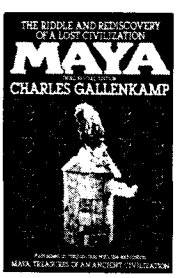

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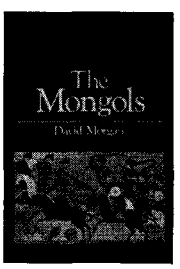

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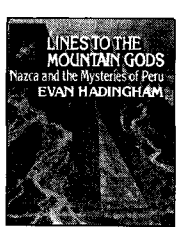

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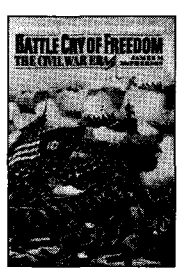

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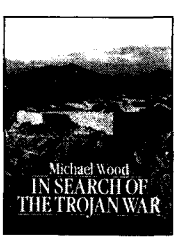

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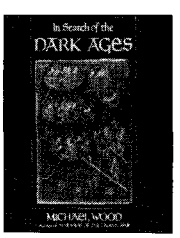

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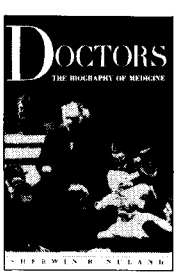

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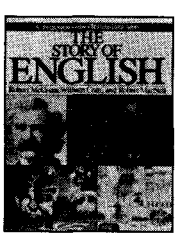

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and universities have departments or programs of Afro-American Studies, and that was the label under which the group was identified in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. So why the change to "African-American"? Maybe because the name Jackson really cares most about is his own.

STEPHAN THERNSTROM

Stephan Thernstrom is Winthrop Professor of History at Harvard University and editor of the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*.

So you want to buy a machine gun.

GUNS 'Я' US

I AM OVER 21 years of age. I am a citizen of the United States. I have not been convicted of a felony. And I have not been treated or confined for drug addiction, drunkenness, or mental illness. According to the National Firearms Act of 1934, I thus qualify to purchase a fully automatic machine gun capable of firing hundreds of bullets with a single squeeze of the trigger. A few months ago, I decided to try.

As far as the federal government is concerned, private citizens have always had the right to purchase machine guns—at a price. The Firearms Act, passed by Congress to curb mob warfare, added a $500 manufacturers tax and $200 transfer tax to the cost. And in May 1986, Congress effectively doubled the price by banning the future manufacture of machine guns for private sale, making them an increasingly scarce commodity. Also, prospective machine-gun buyers must go through a lengthy (one to three months) licensing process, including fingerprinting, that helps the FBI do a background check. But provided I pass muster on the federal (and state) level, a MAC-10 or Uzi can be mine.

In order to apply for a machine-gun permit, I have to specify exactly what make of machine gun I want. So I walked down to my local newsstand to consult the machine-gunners equivalent of *Consumer Reports*. *Assault Rifles* carried the definitive work on the .223 controversy—"Can it Measure up to the 7.62 on the Battlefield?" (rest easy, it can). *Firepower* ran a full-page color ad for "Rock n' Roll #3: Sexy Girls and Sexy Guns," a mail-order home video. It starred Dottie/Uzi, Tani Jo/MAC-10, Rosie/MP-5, and Lillian/MP-K and sold for $59.95 plus $3 shipping. Then I came upon an article referring to the Ingram M-11 LISP. The M-11 is a tiny machine pistol that fires 1,200 rounds per minute and fits neatly in a single hand. The CIA used to favor it as a weapon for operations behind enemy lines. That sounded like the gun for me.

Taking names from the advertisers' index, I started calling some of the nation's 3,530 licensed machine-gun dealers. My first call reached an answering machine: "Hello. This is SWD Incorporated. Our offices are closed for the holidays. M-11-9 semi-auto pistols and carbines are in stock. M-11-9, M-11-380, and M-10-45 submachine-guns are also in stock in limited quantities. All SMG [submachine-gun] orders must be prepaid to ensure you receive yours. We will ship semi-autos on a c.o.d. basis. Have a joyous holiday season."

The first dealer I actually contacted told me that federal law requires machine-gun purchases to be in-state transactions. He suggested I locate a local machine-gun shop. If it didn't have the gun I wanted, an out-of-state dealer would then sell the M-11 to the in-state dealer, who would sell it to me. Turning to "Guns" in the Yellow Pages, I found a local machine-gun salesman. I called and asked about the M-11.

"I won't sell it to you," he insisted.

I understood. Surely the Second Amendment wasn't meant to cover weapons used to mow down hundreds of innocent bystanders in the streets of our inner cities.

"It's a piece of junk," he continued. "Try the MAC-10."

The MAC-10 is capable of firing 900 rounds every 60 seconds. The .45 version is a mere 10 ½ inches long and weighs 6.25 pounds. With telescope and silencer, it grows to 22 inches. Critics frown on its unreliability past 30 yards, but the MAC-10 remains an immensely popular weapon. One reason is that buyers don't just get a gun; they get a piece of history. The MAC-10 was one of the ancestors of the Uzi, arguably today's hippest machine gun. The CIA, FBI, DEA, and Special Forces endorse the MAC-10. So do the Crips and Bloods of Los Angeles gang war fame. And so did Tani Jo in "Rock n' Roll #3: Sexy Girls and Sexy Guns." Good enough for Tani Jo, good enough for me. I became a MAC-10 convert.

NOW I WAS ready to apply for a state and federal machine-gun permit. How difficult that is depends on where you live. Some 14 states prohibit private ownership of machine guns; others like Texas, Virginia, and Ohio are notorious for their loose gun laws. In Massachusetts, gun laws are tight. Before going through the cumbersome federal process, I had to think of a subtle way to ask a boss and a friend to provide letters of reference certifying my ability to be a responsible owner of a machine gun. I had to obtain three 1.5 by 1.5 pictures of myself to attach to the handgun application that's required for a machine-gun license. I also had to deal with a police sergeant manning the licensing table who was understandably hostile to civilians seeking machine guns. I persevered.

But the eternally curious federal bureaucracy almost stopped me in my tracks. They sent me a slew of white Form 4's and yellow Form 7's required by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, which keeps track of the number of machine guns in private circulation (191,857 as of December 1988). No one, not the National Rifle Association, the local gun dealer, my friends at work, my mother, even the people I called at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,

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and Firearms, could decipher them. Paperwork is America's tightest means of gun control.

There had to be an easier, yet legal, way to evade the bureaucracy. I went back to my magazines and found Automatic Weaponry of Brentwood, Tennessee, "America's Foremost Supplier of Title II Firearms [machine guns and silencers]."

The man at Automatic Weaponry said they specialized in simplifying the federal licensing process. I give Automatic Weaponry basic biographical information over the phone. I send them a 50 percent deposit that's refundable except for a $100 processing fee. They mail me an order form, the already completed white Form 4 and two FBI Fingerprint Applicant Cards. I sign the forms, affix a recent 2 by 2 photograph, and declare a purpose for purchasing a machine gun ("don't put down 'to kill human beings,' " he suggested). I take them to my local chief law enforcement officer, who fingerprints me and verifies my identity and age. He also conducts a National Crime Information Center search for felony convictions (misdemeanors OK). He signs the forms. I mail the paperwork back to Automatic Weaponry. I pay the balance. (Automatic Weaponry accepts personal and business checks, and all major credit cards.) They ship the weapon to an in-state gun dealer via United Parcel Service. Seventy to 90 days after I first contact Automatic Weaponry, I pick up my machine gun. A MAC-10 .45 caliber in mint condition costs $1,295 plus the $200 federal machine-gun transfer tax (Tani Jo not included).

For those with less time, money, and respect for the law, there's an easier way. A semi-automatic MAC-10 retails for as little as $350 and is sold under the same federal regulatory guidelines as a rifle—no fingerprinting or background check required, just proof that you are a U.S. citizen over 18, are not a convicted felon, and have never been confined or incarcerated for drunkenness, drug addiction, or mental illness. In some states I could walk into a gun shop, fill out a few forms, plunk down some cash, and leave with gun in hand. True, like all semi-automatics it would fire only one bullet with each squeeze of the trigger. But if I wanted to risk a 20-year jail term and $20,000 fine, I could convert my semi- into a fully-automatic 900-round-a-minute weapon. A matchstick is all that's needed to convert some guns. The MAC-10 is more sophisticated: one gun dealer I spoke with said he's used a nickel. A guy at the NRA boasted it would take him 15 minutes. But what about someone like me, with zero mechanical ability? He asked if I could change a sparkplug. Probably, I replied. Don't worry, he said, you could do it in an hour.

MATTHEW MARANZ

Matthew Maranz is a student at the Columbia School of Journalism.

America's morbid aversion to risk.

FEAR OF LIVING

BY HENRY FAIRLIE

IN JANUARY 1967 the first Apollo spacecraft caught fire during a test on the launchpad. Three astronauts were killed. The nation was shocked and horrified, all the more so because the screams and scrambles of the astronauts could be clearly heard. But although there was a congressional hearing, and some delay of the manned flights, the Apollo program went smartly ahead, with the full understanding and support of the nation, and within 18 months Apollo 11 landed on the moon, ahead of the deadline set by John Kennedy. The Apollo disaster was not graven on the public mind as a rebuke to America's confidence in its technology, or taken as the occasion to preach that Americans must learn the limits to their energy and power.

Nineteen years later, the space shuttle Challenger was destroyed before our eyes on television. It was a spectacular tragedy, the result of human miscalculation and technical failure, neither of which should have been present, perhaps, but both of which are understood risks in the still dangerous enterprise of space flight. Yet the prevailing mood in America so panicked NASA that it took almost three years to send up another shuttle. NASA even reached the stage, as members of its staff said, of taking so many precautions that it was in danger of enlarging, instead of diminishing, the possibility of malfunction.

In the 19 years between these tragedies, the idea that our individual lives and the nation's life can and should be risk-free has grown to be an obsession, driven far and deep into American attitudes. Indeed, the desire for a risk-free society is one of the most debilitating influences in America today, progressively enfeebling the economy with a mass of safety regulations and a widespread fear of liability rulings, and threatening to create an unbuoyant and uninventive society. As many studies show, this is strikingly an American phenomenon, one that seems to have taken root in yet another distortion of the philosophy

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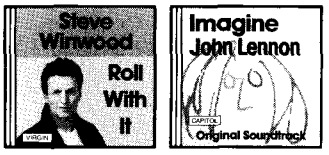

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of rights underlying the Constitution, as if the Declaration of Independence had been rewritten to include freedom from risk among the self-evident rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This morbid aversion to risk calls into question how Americans now envision the destiny of their country.

If America's new timorousness had prevailed among the Vikings, their ships with the bold prows but frail hulls would have been declared unseaworthy. The Norsemen would have stayed home and jogged. Columbus's three tubs would not have been allowed to sail; as it was, one was left wrecked on American shores. The Vikings and Columbus were exploring what was as unknown to them then as our solar system is to us today, and it is not only the practical achievements of such venturing that are frustrated by the desire for a risk-free society. Something of the questing endeavor of the human spirit is also lost. The Vikings made sagas of their explorations, as European and English literature flowered during the great Age of Exploration. There once was, but there is not now, a promise of saga in America. Its literature has retreated into a preoccupation with private anxieties and fretting.

At Three Mile Island, the fail-safe system worked. The power station switched itself off. There was a scare, but no disaster. Yet Three Mile Island in the American mind is an emblem of catastrophe. Nuclear power in America, as in no equivalent industrial or industrializing nation, has been almost paralyzed, although it is the only sufficient, efficient, and *relatively* safe source of energy that can avoid the greater risks of pollution and the "greenhouse effect." Of course there is a risk in nuclear power, and there should be thorough inspections and safeguards. Of course, also, there is such a thing as a level of risk that is unacceptable. But in America the threshold of tolerable risk has now been set so low that the nation is refusing to pay the inevitable costs of human endeavor. Stand beneath the majesty of the Grand Coulee Dam, or gaze up at the marvel of the Brooklyn Bridge—"O Harp and Altar," as Hart Crane sang of it—and count the number of lives lost in their construction. But then feel the power, even the beauty, of both dam and bridge, and weigh the cost of lives against the benefits they have brought.

THE ORIGINS of the widespread refusal to accept a sometimes high level of risk as a normal and necessary hazard of life lie in the early 1970s. As America lost heart in the prosecution of the war in Vietnam, the energy of the dissenters—the vanguard of the "Me Decade"—turned to lavish care for the environment, the snail darter, and their own exquisite, often imagined, physical and emotional well-being. The simultaneous loss of faith in American technology was part of the same phenomenon; technology, it was observed, not only fouled the environment, but had proved incapable of winning a war against guerrillas in the jungle. And beyond this, of course, has been the growth of the larger belief that science itself has somehow betrayed us, that it promises evil and not beneficence.

This loss of courage and faith has manifested itself in many ways, but it has found its most immediately dangerous expression in tort (liability) law. Tort law is not only threatening to make the economy uncompetitive, it is warping the American legal system and its judicial philosophy. As Peter W. Huber observes in *The Legal Revolution and Its Consequences*, "No other country in the world administers anything like it." Tort law was "set in place in the 1960s and 1970s by a new generation of lawyers and judges. . . . Some grew famous and more grew rich in selling their services to enforce the rights they themselves invented."

In November a court in Albany had seriously to consider a claim for $1 million in damages against New York state, brought by a woman who, while she was sunbathing on the beach in a public park on Long Island, was hit in the neck by a Frisbee being tossed between a nine-year-old boy and a 20-year-old woman. Her lawyer contended that the Frisbee was a "dangerous instrument" that should not have been allowed on the beach. (Since the idea of the Frisbee was taken from the bakery of that name where the workers whizzed pie plates to each other, rather than laboriously carry them, are we to assume that today the Occupational Safety and Health Administration would have stepped in to stop this skilled, efficient, rapid, but clearly "dangerous" method of conveyance?) At least this woman's claim was thrown out: the judge observed that she could have moved to another part of the beach if she feared injury from these alarming flying objects. Consider also the mother who sued a baseball club because her son was injured by a ball fouled back to their seats. It may well be that they had chosen seats there because her son had hopes of capturing a foul ball as a trophy, in which case the risk was known and invited by the mother; in any event, blame cannot be said to lie with the club, the hitter, or the ball. Here we see one pernicious moral effect of America's growing fear of risk: a commensurate diminution of the notion of individual responsibility for one's actions.

CLAIMS OF others' liability for our plights are, with the support of judges, lawyers, and juries, producing a "tort tax" on goods and services. They amount to a $300 billion levy on the American economy, observes Huber, that "accounts for 30 percent of the price of a stepladder and 95 percent of the price of childhood vaccines." The development of tort law has been particularly vicious in its effect because of another phenomenon peculiar to the United States—the award of huge punitive damages (as opposed to nominal damages, intended only to compensate the victim for the actual injury inflicted). The flagrant injustice of many of these awards was illustrated in a case brought against the Monsanto Company that sought damages for 65 plaintiffs for alleged personal injuries from one of the company's products used to make wood preservatives. After the longest-running trial in American history, the jury awarded each plaintiff one dollar in nominal damages, but then, "in a burst of tortured reasoning," as Monsanto Chairman Richard J. Mahoney says, awarded $16 million to the plaintiffs in punitive damages.

There is no justification for this. The Supreme Court has

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recently agreed to hear a case in which the constitutionality of huge punitive damages will be tested. In an earlier case, Justices Antonin Scalia and Sandra Day O'Connor observed that "this grant of wholly standardless discretion to determine the severity of punishment appears inconsistent with due process." Meanwhile, the awards further frustrate, if they are not crushing, the spirit of innovation in American business. The Conference Board in 1988 conducted a survey of chief executive officers. It showed that uncertainty over potential liability had led almost 50 percent to discontinue product lines, and nearly 40 percent to withhold new products, including beneficial drugs. The fault lies not only with the "wholly standardless discretion" allowed to juries to determine the severity of the punishment, but with the present power of a single jury to decide what conduct is liable for punitive damages.

The result of all this, says Justice Richard Neely of the West Virginia Supreme Court, author of *The Product Liability Mess*, is that "as a state court judge much of my time is devoted to ways to make business pay for everyone else's bad luck." When the step of a stepladder breaks because it was made of defective material, the payment of reasonable damages to the injured party is just. But as anyone with any household experience knows, sometimes a broken stepladder is just a broken stepladder, the result of bad luck; and surely each of us has the individual responsibility to approach any stepladder with some circumspection. The prevailing attitude in America is that people should be safeguarded against not only negligence but bad luck; it has become all too easy for lawyers to manipulate jurors who generally are scientifically ignorant and believe that they can be guaranteed a risk-free society.

ONE CONFIRMATION that the obsessive American aversion to risk is a growth of the last two decades is the proliferation in that time of academic and quasi-academic literature on risk, with such titles as "Public Perceptions of Acceptable Risks as Evidence of Their Cognitive, Technical, and Social Structure." The conclusions of much of this literature were drawn together in 1982 by Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky in *Risk and Culture*, their own still impressive critique of this phenomenon. Among the interesting questions asked by the authors is "Why is asbestos poisoning now seen to be more fearsome than fire," especially when asbestos was introduced and welcomed as a prevention of injury or death by fire? The question is made even more interesting by Mahoney's revelation that Monsanto "abandoned a possible substitute product for asbestos just before commercialization, not because it was unsafe or ineffective, but because a whole generation of liability lawyers had been schooled in asbestos liability theories that could possibly be turned against the substitute." In principle, Douglas and Wildavsky note, a society selects which risks it will worry, and perhaps even legislate, about in the hope of diminishing or eliminating them. But why do Americans seem to be more concerned about the risks of pollution than about the budget deficit, economic stagnation, and even war?

Who are the people who promote the intolerance of risk in contemporary America, and select which risks the society should worry about? It is reasonable and almost certainly correct to assume a link between the attitudes that have led to the slowing of such new and promising industries as space technology and nuclear power, the gross development of liability law and litigation, the concern about environmental pollution, and the finicky attention to one's bodily health, comfort, and even purity. Together they form a syndrome. The people who are environmental extremists are likely also to be exorbitantly fussy about the risks to their bodily purity from a multitude of pollutants, natural and artifical, not much concerned about the progress of the space and nuclear power industries, automatically against manufacturing companies in liability cases, and generally uninterested in creating and maintaining a productive industrial economy.

From such people are drawn the staffs and membership of the special interest groups that have sedulously promoted America's risk aversion. Douglas and Wildavsky counted some 75 national environmental groups alone, and thousands more at state and local levels. By something like sleight of hand they represent themselves as public interest groups, but in fact these risk-averse groups speak for a very clear special interest: those who work not in manufacturing industries, but in the now vast services sector, including government and corporate bureaucracies, and who manufacture nothing. In short, they do not get their hands dirty. So it is easy for them—it does not violate their "class interest"—to be indifferent to creating a productive industrial economy. It is no sweat off their backs if a manufacturer is closed down, and its workers laid off for environmental reasons. The risk-averse groups are drawn from a privileged class.

SINCE IT IS in the interest of these groups to multiply regulations and strengthen their control of the economy, they have encouraged the growth of government bureaucracy (federal, state, and local). The federal environmental agencies have grown like a coral reef into this bureaucracy and are as indestructible. Since their bureaucrats also wish to keep their paper-shuffling jobs, they work hand in glove to promote yet more regulation of the manufacturing sector of the economy.

One of the reasons why an aversion to risk has taken hold in America is the manner in which the American political system has developed during precisely the same two decades as the growth of the movement for a risk-free society. All the influences that have been observed and analyzed—the decline of parties, the proliferation of committees and subcommittees and the undermining of seniority in Congress, and the development of the primary electoral system—have given advantage to single-issue special interest groups. Direct-mailings have provided special interest groups, as well as candidates, with direct access to the voters without having to work through the established political institutions that would have forced them to adjust their own aims to accommodate the broader national interest.

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Six-Million-Dollar Man

Nobody seems to mind the Federal Aviation Administration's new security measures, enacted after Pan American Airways Flight 103 exploded over Scotland. "Sometimes, passengers moan and groan about the additional delays, but if you press them on it, they're happy to have the government take precautions to increase their safety," Jack Corbett, general counsel for the Airline Passengers of America, told the *Washington Post*. Increased security will no doubt cut the risks of air travel, and common sense would seem to demand, as George Bush put it, that "you do everything you can in your power" to protect yourself from terrorists. But some gritty utilitarian calculus suggests that the gain may not be worth the wait, and that our efforts to fend off glamorous forms of death let more mundane, but greater, risks go unchallenged.

How much, exactly, will society pay for each life saved by the FAA's new regulations? We can get a ballpark buck-per-body figure by imagining that all governments with international airports adopted such measures (as many already have). The main economic cost is the loss of productive time for passengers. T. Allan McArtor, administrator of the FAA, estimates that the new measures—including more random baggage searches and X-ray or physical examination of all checked luggage—might force passengers to arrive as much as an hour earlier for their flights. Though government and airline officials have subsequently suggested three hours, let's take McArtor at his number.

The International Civil Aviation Organization of the United Nations places the total number of passengers on international flights in 1987 at 221,471,000—an underestimate, since it excludes the carriers of non-member states. Of the 221,471,000 extra hours spent waiting in airports, let's say, arbitrarily, that half would have otherwise been burned off in feckless pursuits, but that the other 110,735,500 would have been spent hard at work. Now (arbitrary move No. 2), let's price this time at the American minimum wage, $3.35 an hour (even though many international travelers make 20 to 30 times more than that). The result: $370,963,925 spent each year, not including the cost of security guards and security equipment, to prevent more jets from exploding.

Since 1976, 792 people, of many nationalities, have died in aircraft bombings, an average of 61 per year. Let's assume that the rate is not headed upward, and that the new measures prevent all future bombings (two assumptions whose countervailing implausibilities, we'll assume, roughly cancel each other out). That means we're spending $6,081,375.81 a year for each life saved. Pretty pricey.

The murder of 270 innocents is a numbing horror, but when you consider that in 1985, the last previous year of air terror, an American was 25 times more likely to choke to death than to die in a terrorist action, you might wonder why the world's governments should spend an amount more than twice the 1986 gross national product of Gambia to shave off this particular little bump of risk.

Another example of the "safety at all costs now that I think of it" mentality was the angst-ridden resurrection of the space shuttle. NASA spent $1.1 billion on new safety features. Of that, $62.8 million went for an escape hatch with a pole to let the crew parachute from a doomed shuttle. This system would not have saved the crew of the Challenger. Indeed, astronauts will be able to use it only under very specific conditions, while cruising at a stable altitude at low speed with the engines not firing. Nonetheless, let's assume that in one flight, the pole saves the lives of an entire crew of five astronauts. Price: $12,560,000 a head. Granted, NASA invests at least one year of training in its fliers, but it hedges its bets by keeping 90-odd extras waiting in the wings. A shuttle crew is not irreplaceable.

A slightly less ludicrous, but still not cheap, hedge against risk: automobile airbags. Beginning in 1985, Ford offered airbags as an $815 option, with few takers. Then, last May, Chrysler announced that it would make airbags standard equipment on all cars by 1990. At the time, someone from the Travelers Insurance Companies estimated that "widespread use of airbags and seat belts could save 10,000 lives a year."

Let's assume he's right. By September 1989 all new cars sold in America are expected to have airbags (two-fifths do now), as manufacturers, spurred by Chrysler, equip their cars with a product consumers were unwilling to pay for as an option. And let's assume that, as analysts suggest, this volume pulls the price of airbags down to $300. In 1987, 10,122,154 new cars were sold in the United States. That means $3,036,646,200 worth of airbags, or $303,664.62 for each life saved—a real bargain, relatively speaking.

All of these numbers take on meaning only when we look at the spectrum's other end: how little our society is willing to spend to save lives threatened in less spectacular fashion. Recently, UNICEF issued a report, "The State of the World's Children 1989." It's a grim read. "Some 14 million children are still dying each year from common illnesses and undernutrition, most of which could be prevented by relatively simple, relatively low-cost methods." That's about 40,000 children dying daily. Or, to put it in terms that might attract journalists, and through them our public officials: that's 154 Pan Am Flights 103, full of children, exploding every day.

The "low-cost methods" include primary health care and piped water with basic sanitation, at five and six dollars, respectively, per person per year. Immunization to save three million more lives annually would cost $500 million. That's math you can do in your head: $166.66 per life.

The United States devotes less of its GNP to overseas aid than any other major industrialized nation—one-fifth of one percent. Our own nation's capital has a higher infant mortality rate than Costa Rica, and adults and children living on the streets run readily reducible risks that make a Pan Am passenger seem invulnerable by comparison. Improving the odds for the world's poorest, like combating terrorism, requires an international effort with tough, principled leadership. The first step is to get our math straightened out.

JAMES BENNET

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Never has it been so evident that, as Macaulay wrote to his American correspondent H. S. Randall, the biographer of Jefferson, "your Constitution is all sail and no anchor." Those now filling the sails are the special interest groups, of whom the risk-averse are the most successful. European countries, in contrast, simply have not permitted the sacrifice of their political systems to the single-issue special interests. Strong parties compel these special interests to adjust to the national interests.

But these groups could not have been so destructively successful if Americans had not already suffered a loss of faith in their nation—a loss of faith in the science and technology on which American progress has been built (while paradoxically they look to science to create their version of a risk-free country); a loss of faith in America's inexhaustible possibilities, its sense of limitlessness; a loss of faith in the ever-advancing frontier, even, as Kennedy proclaimed, the exploration of the new frontier in space. And with it all, a loss of the American adventuring spirit, of the American gusto whose absence the world now laments, the gusto that, until the 1960s, blew like a fresh wind around the globe, showing what could be accomplished in so short a time by a nation that did not shrink from risk but found it a challenge.

There is something grossly at fault in the conception of the Vietnam War Memorial and the false veneration it excites. It is not, like the Iwo Jima Memorial, a monument to heroism, or even to sacrifice. It is a monument to a loss of life that is seen as wasteful and dishonorable. The feelings it excites reflect a nation that is coming to believe that even war should be fought without risk to its fighting men or risk of defeat.

A nation should lament the deaths, and succor the survivors. But it cannot forever be counting its dead.

NICE GUYS

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

(Editor's note: this is the second in an occasional series of articles about people TNR *likes.)*

Surgeon General C. Everett Koop is once again riling his former allies on the right. On January 9 he is sending President Reagan a report on the psychological effects of abortion. To his own dismay, the staunchly anti-abortion Koop has found that women are not necessarily traumatized by the experience. "There is a whole segment of the population that says the best thing that happened to me was my abortion," Koop says.

The antagonism generated by the report will only reinforce the reversal over the past eight years in Koop's constellation of friends and enemies. The New Right, which once championed him as a bearded Ahab who would slay the white whale of liberalism (and which helped him get his job), now denounces him as an instrument of immorality. Meanwhile, the liberals, feminists, and public health lobbyists who once called him "Dr. Kook" sing his praises.

All of this means that George Bush will have a difficult decision to make not long after taking office. Koop's second term expires in November (unlike other Cabinet officials, the surgeon general serves four-year terms). Whether he is reappointed will be an important test of whether Bush is committed more to a "kinder, gentler nation" or to appeasing the Republican right.

Theories differ as to how a man who used to denounce abortion, feminism, and the gay rights movement—and who once said government-subsidized day-care centers smack of Nazi Germany—has managed to alienate so many on the right and endear himself to so many on the left. His liberal supporters say he has "grown" in office. His right-wing critics think he sold himself out to the liberal and homosexual lobbies. "He was mau-maued by the confirmation process," one former Reagan administration official explained.

Both groups are right in believing that Koop has changed. Largely in response to the AIDS epidemic, he has become tolerant of ways of life and thought that he previously condemned, gradually developing more liberal attitudes, if not convictions. But both right-wingers and liberals profoundly misjudged him from the beginning. Bewitched by current political categories, they mistook an old-fashioned Christian whose religious views coincided with certain right-wing positions for a radical conservative committed to storming the liberal battlements in the name of Jesus. And they failed to take into account Koop's almost antique conception of public service—a remarkable ability to separate his professional conduct from his moral and political beliefs. Koop remains a conservative, but of a kind rarely encountered in Washington these days.

What originally made New Right lobbyists enthusiastic

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about Koop was his impassioned opposition to abortion. In 1975 Koop and theologian Harold O. J. Brown met at Billy Graham's home in Minneapolis to found the Christian Action Council, the first Protestant lobby against abortion. Koop wrote two books against abortion, including a 1979 tract with evangelist Francis Schaeffer, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race*. Koop and Schaeffer also produced an anti-abortion movie of the same name that they took around the country. It featured photos of dolls, symbolizing aborted babies, strewn over the floor of the Dead Sea.

Koop's position on abortion was entirely uncompromising. In *The Right to Live, the Right to Die*, he explained how he had once believed that "Christian compassion" allowed for abortion in "hard cases," but that under the influence of Brown he had decided to take an absolute stand "for the sanctity of life." Koop saw the issue in almost apocalyptic terms. "The legalization of abortion on demand in the United States," he wrote, "will someday be looked upon by historians as the last turning point of a materialistic society in abandoning the advantages accruing to our society from a Judeo-Christian heritage."

Koop's other social views equally suggested sympathy for the New Right. He denounced "women's lib" and "gay pride" for encouraging "anti-family trends." He declared that the establishment of "government-subsidized child-care centers" was a sign that the United States was following the same path as "Hitler's Germany." And his religious views were, if anything, even more extreme. Raised in the Dutch Reform Church, Koop was not only a fundamentalist who rejected the theory of evolution, but also a Calvinist who believed, in Harold O. J. Brown's words, that "government has the obligation to uphold fundamental principles of morality." In *The Right to Live, the Right to Die*, Koop defended the practice of outlawing "private activity . . . repugnant to the moral sensitivity of the American people. That is why we have laws against such seemingly private engagements as homosexuality, sodomy, prostitution, and adultery."

BUT THESE similarities with New Right views obscured much more fundamental differences. Paul Weyrich, Howard Phillips, Richard Viguerie, and others built the New Right in the late '70s out of the conviction that laissez-faire and anti-Communist conservatives had to attract blue-collar Democrats. One of the best ways, they discovered, was through social issues like abortion. In contrast, Koop's anti-abortion activity was not part of a broader political agenda; it was entirely an expression of his religious belief. He worked against abortion in the same spirit that he worked with MAP International—a Third World medical relief agency—or with Philadelphia's Evangelical Family and Child Service. Indeed, Koop distrusted the right-wing anti-abortion lobbies. He was, Brown explains, suspicious of ideology, and especially "ideology that is being presented as a sort of necessary consequence of a theological position." Koop says the right-wing groups put "ideology above integrity."

Koop had never been a political activist. The son of a banker, he grew up to be a typical upper-class Republican. He was a member of Philadelphia's Union League Club, and of the Committee of Seventy (a civic group dedicated to cleaning up the city's corrupt administrations), but he never participated in local or state Republican politics. In 1964 he voted for Barry Goldwater, but in 1976 he supported Gerald Ford against Ronald Reagan. He was neither a "Reagan Republican" nor a "movement conservative." Koop says, "I was labeled as one of them by people who were, but I was never actively engaged." Koop was a conservative Christian *and* a Republican rather than a Jerry Falwell-style Christian conservative Republican.

In addition, Koop was a highly respected surgeon, the founder of the department of pediatric surgery at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. As an administrator, he learned to adjudicate among competing interests. He was known as a man who did not willfully impose his religious or political convictions on others, or even on his own policies. Koop held an Aristotelian view of his job that carried over to his government work. He saw "the office" of surgeon general as having a function independent of the surgeon general's own beliefs and wishes. For instance, if there were a conflict between protecting the public health and condoning actions he considered immoral, the surgeon general would have to protect the public health. Similarly, in a conflict between medical evidence and religious belief, he would have to go with the medical evidence. From the beginning, this distinction put Koop at odds with New Right activists who wanted him to use his position as a bully pulpit for their political agenda.

KOOP'S NOMINATION was opposed by 13 major dailies, including the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, all the major liberal lobbies, including the AFL-CIO and NOW, and the American Public Health Association (APHA), which had never before opposed a nominee for surgeon general. APHA Director William McBeath declared that he would rather the position be abolished than Koop be confirmed. Koop tried to win over his opponents by promising not to use the post to campaign against abortion. He assured the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources that he would not "continue to be a speaker on the pro-life circuit" or "use any post that I might have in the government as a pulpit for an ideology." Most of Koop's supporters assumed he was making a kind of election-day promise, but Koop meant what he said. He saw abortion primarily as a moral and religious rather than public health problem.

Barely six months after he took office, Koop was involved in a public controversy, as he tried unsuccessfully to stop a Bloomington, Indiana, couple from allowing its child, born with Down's syndrome, to die. Soon thereafter, an infant identified by the press as "Baby Jane Doe" was born in Long Island with spina bifida, a spinal illness that can cause mental retardation and that must be treated immediately to prevent death from infection. When the parents refused to treat the infection, Koop tried to sub-

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poena the baby's medical records. He failed, but managed to arouse an outcry so loud that the baby's neurosurgeon took measures to save the child. Koop set about writing regulations that would prevent other babies from being left to die.

His actions stemmed from his belief in the sanctity of life, but were entirely justified by his responsibility as a health officer and by his secular commitment to secure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. His actions were backed not only by the New Right lobbies, which temporarily felt vindicated in supporting him, but also by civil libertarians such as Nat Hentoff.

KOOP FIRST offended Reagan conservatives, including his chief Senate sponsor, North Carolina Republican Senator Jesse Helms, with his outspoken campaign against tobacco products. At issue was not merely an important Republican constituency, Southern tobacco growers, but also the administration's unequivocal support of free enterprise. In May 1984, Koop issued a blistering condemnation of smoking and the tobacco industry. Attacking the effects of "passive smoking," when non-smokers inhale smoke from others' cigarettes, Koop called for a "smokeless society by the year 2000." He also endorsed smoking bans in the workplace and other public places. Helms called for his resignation, and the administration sabotaged his attempt to strengthen anti-smoking regulations.

Koop clashed directly with the administration two years later when he came out in favor of a bill banning cigarette advertising. White House chief of staff Don Regan had tried to prevent his appearance before the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, but Regan finally relented on the condition that a Justice Department official accompany him and speak against the bill. Koop did his best Dr. Johnson imitation when Ohio Representative Buz Lukens defended cigarette advertising on the grounds that "more discussion . . . is the answer rather than less." Koop replied, "I don't think advertising, sir, is discussion."

His anti-smoking crusade bore out the extent to which he was a conservative Christian rather than a Christian conservative. Like most Republicans, Koop favors a free market economy, but faced with a conflict between public health and the free market, he doesn't hesitate to choose public health. Koop even opposes cigarette exports. "There is a higher good than the free market," Koop explains. "I think it is reprehensible for this wealthy nation to export disability, disease, and death to the Third World. I don't think you ought to trade cigarettes for Toyotas."

Koop's attack on smoking irritated free market conservatives but didn't bother New Right leaders like Weyrich. It took the AIDS epidemic to alienate them. Weyrich, Howard Phillips, and others on the right blamed the AIDS epidemic on gays, and wanted the Reagan administration to use the epidemic to point out the immorality of homosexuality. During Koop's first term, his immediate superior, Assistant Secretary Edward Brandt, ordered him not to take a public position on AIDS, but after Brandt resigned Koop began answering reporters' questions on the subject. Then, after the 1984 election, Reagan, put on the defensive about the administration's lack of action on the disease, asked Koop to prepare a report.

After personally going through 27 drafts, Koop issued the report in October 1986. He hoped, by explaining that AIDS cannot be spread through casual contact, to calm the rising hysteria over the disease. But the report raised hackles on the right by calling for AIDS education in elementary school, by advocating the use of condoms by heterosexuals and homosexuals, and by showing signs of social tolerance. "At the beginning of the AIDS epidemic many Americans had little sympathy for people with AIDS," Koop wrote. "The feeling was that somehow people from certain groups 'deserved' their illness. Let us put those feelings behind us. We are fighting a disease, not a people."

Koop's position was based on the belief that as a "health man" he had to support programs that protect the public health even if they indirectly condoned behavior that he disapproved of. "With AIDS," Koop later explained, "the law has to wink at certain things." Koop also believed that AIDS education had to be credible. "When you approach the 70 percent of sexually active teenagers and tell them to just say no, they laugh at you," he said.

THE NEW RIGHT was not persuaded. In its January 1987 issue, *Conservative Digest* charged that Koop was "proposing instructing in buggery for schoolchildren as young as the third grade on the spurious grounds that the problem is one of ignorance and not morality." *National Review* accused Koop of "criminal negligence" in recommending the use of condoms. In response, Koop accused *National Review* of "letting politics and ideology supersede science."

In March, Koop appeared at the National Press Club. Asked what he would recommend to a pregnant women with AIDS, he said, "If you wanted to give her all the possibilities that were available to her, you would have to mention abortion." He denied that he would recommend an abortion, but he insisted that as a "health man" he would nevertheless have to present her with all the legal options. Koop's critics on the right nevertheless accused him of recommending abortion. March for Life called for his resignation, and Weyrich and ERA opponent Phyllis Schlafly wrote a letter to prominent conservatives suggesting that they withdraw their names as sponsors of a May dinner planned to honor Koop. Weyrich and Schlafly wrote that "Koop's proposals for stopping AIDS represent the homosexuals' views, not those of the pro-family movement."

Weyrich and Schlafly succeeded in getting all the major Republican presidential candidates except George Bush to withdraw their names as sponsors. Jack Kemp's spokesman explained that the congressman was withdrawing because "Koop came out with the statement that said basically women carrying AIDS should abort their children."

Koop was angered by the conservatives' attacks. According to Weyrich, Koop refused to shake hands with him when their paths crossed recently. Koop maintains that his actions toward AIDS were entirely consistent with the prin-

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ciples that he has always believed in. "My position on AIDS is pro-life," he says. "I am trying to preserve the life of people that many of my friends don't think you should give the time of day to."

There is no doubt that Koop's actions have reflected his old-fashioned separation of professional responsibility from personal views on morality. But when he talks about the issues raised by the AIDS epidemic, it becomes evident also that his morals and some of his Calvinist beliefs have changed. Koop goes out of his way not to blame the gay community for AIDS, and he now rejects the idea that the state should pass laws against homosexuality. "I don't think such laws are enforceable," he says.

Koop also hedges when expressing his fundamentalist convictions. When I asked him about Darwinism, he took an agnostic position similar to that of late-19th-century Protestants. The theory of evolution, Koop said, "doesn't conflict with what I believe. There are a lot of things we don't know."

But Koop's critics on the right, if correct in perceiving that Koop has drifted toward the center, are wrong in attributing the change to his being "mau-maued" at his confirmation hearings. Rather, the change grew out of his encounter with the AIDS epidemic. "He suffers with the disease of AIDS and he suffers with the prospect of millions being affected. This is an agonizing situation for him," Harold O. J. Brown says. Koop has let the struggle against AIDS color his views on a wide range of subjects. He will no longer condemn homosexuality, because he sees homosexuals as innocent victims of a terrible disease. He has turned away from the right and from his former allies because he believes they lack compassion for AIDS victims. He may even be turning away from former theological convictions as they become linked in his mind to public intolerance of AIDS victims.

Koop's report on the psychological effects of abortion is bound to raise new questions about whether he has abandoned his absolute opposition to abortion. Ironically, Reagan had asked Koop to do the report to mollify pro-life lobbyists angered by the administration's dismissal of Jo Ann Gaspar, an official at Health and Human Services. White House aide Dinesh D'Souza had convinced the president that by documenting the terrible psychological effects of abortion, Koop's report could lay the basis for overturning *Roe* v. *Wade*.

D'Souza had reason to believe that Koop would echo the prevailing assumptions about post-abortion stress. In *Whatever Happened to the Human Race*, Koop and Schaeffer had written that abortions create "hard people" and "stamp out motherliness" and are "a bewildering nightmare." But in preparing the study, Koop and several staff people went over the scientific evidence carefully, and concluded that past studies demonstrating post-abortion stress were flawed. Still, Koop's moral convictions remain unchanged. He does not believe that abortions are acceptable, only that the question of whether they are acceptable must be settled on moral and religious rather than medical grounds.

The way Koop conducted the study is further evidence of his own thorny conservatism. He remains unalterably opposed to abortion, but he also remains a professional committed to medical science and to the responsibilities of his office. "What has given me so much trouble in this job from the right," Koop says, "is that I separate ideology, religion, and other things from my sworn duty as a health officer in this country."

The Revolution meets the new France.

LIBERTÉ, EGALITÉ, HAVE A NICE DAY

BY DAVID A. BELL

TWO HUNDRED YEARS after the French Revolution, there are still Royalists in France. The place to meet them is outside the Left Bank church of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet on Sundays, when priests loyal to schismatic archbishop Marcel Lefebvre celebrate the traditional Latin mass. These irredentists are a pathetic lot—pious old ladies, earnest, clean-cut young men in their Sunday best, a few of their more sinister peers wearing leather jackets and the insignia of marginal extreme-right parties. They stand among the crowds leaving the church, selling pamphlets, broadsides, and, especially, kitsch: fleur-de-lis belt buckles and lapel pins, monarchist bumper stickers, gaudy family trees of the House of Bourbon (down to the "current" King Alfonse II), and portraits of the "martyred" Louis XVI.

Few political movements ever completely die here. Long after losing both raison d'être and popular support, tiny bands of devoted militants remain on the scene, refusing to abandon hopes of final victory. The microscopic

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"Free Thought" movement, for instance, still carries on the anti-clerical battles fought by Voltaire. Its bookstore sells grisly postcards depicting the agony of a young 18th-century nobleman executed for blasphemy. Even the Vichy of Marshall Pétain still has a few supporters who go on television occasionally to defend the indefensible. The most recent arrival in these shadowy margins is the once-powerful Communist Party, which won less than seven percent of the vote in last spring's presidential elections. The party's rigidity and myopia have led to criticism in (of all places) *Izvestia*, but so far, its most visible concession to *perestroika* has been a fashion show featuring Yves St. Laurent at its annual fair.

HAS THE French Revolution itself become a dried-up relic? In theory, of course not. The symbols of the Revolution, long as ideological and partisan as the hammer and sickle, are today the uncontested symbols of France itself: the tricolor flag, the "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" motto that adorns French coinage, the image of Liberty enshrined in every town hall. Yet despite a predictable amount of hoopla, the upcoming bicentennial of 1789 has been greeted by an astonishing lack of enthusiasm among politicians and the public alike. To give just one illustration, when a televised re-enactment of Louis XVI's trial paused for an hour so that viewers could phone in a verdict (not guilty), the break was filled by a sex variety show featuring full frontal nudity and Dr. Ruth.

Even the historians, who have marked the date with a Trimalchio's Feast of publishing (over 500 titles, at last count), have not rendered the events of 1789 immediate and compelling. The prevailing sentiments were summed up this fall by a trio of intellectuals, led by historian François Furet, in their book *The Republic of the Center*: "Let's not play with words: at this point, the bicentennial of 1789 seems to us the shroud of tradition. . . . If history, according to Michelet, is the complete resurrection of the past, anniversaries constitute its burial."

To an American, this rings false. The bicentennials we celebrated in 1976 and 1988 may have been corny and trivial at times, but they were not "burials": they reaffirmed the living significance of key historical events. The French, however, have had a much more complex and tortured relationship with their own revolution. Until quite recently, most of them treated it less as a fait accompli than as the starting point and symbol of an ongoing struggle. The struggle was real, since a self-proclaimed Counter-Revolutionary tradition remained a force in French politics until 1945. And even after this movement had finally withered down to the diehards gathered at St. Nicolas du Chardonnet, the left still clung to the image of 1789 as the mother of modern social revolutions, particularly that of 1917. The Revolution, recast on a global scale, continued. But now the Communist Party is on the ropes, and the Socialists are divided and uncertain of their ideology. Those who come to praise the Revolution are finding themselves burying it instead.

The inherent difficulty of commemorating the French Revolution begins with the event itself. Or rather the events, since historians have not even been able to agree when the Revolution really ended. Was it in 1794, with the fall of Robespierre? In 1799, when Napoleon seized power? Why not 1804, when Napoleon proclaimed himself emperor, or 1815, at Waterloo? Furet (whose work on the Revolution and its legacy has made him the most prominent French historian of the 1980s) has just published a book titled *The Revolution: 1770-1880*. In the ten years after 1789 alone, France was transformed from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, to democratic republic, to a sort of ideological dictatorship, to something that often resembled a corrupt one-party state, and finally, to a military dictatorship. In the process it invented crucial political terminology like the distinction between "left" and "right" (taken from the seating plan of the National Convention), and experimented with radical ideas of direct democracy and social reform. It set political patterns that the rest of the world has been imitating ever since—often quite consciously: the Russian revolutionaries constantly asked, "Which one of us is Danton? Which one is Robespierre?"

IT SHOULD BE possible, theoretically, to sift through this avalanche of events and ideas and come up with a plausible and coherent set of "revolutionary" principles: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, the Rights of Man, the sovereignty of the people. These are indeed what France celebrated 100 years ago, when the Centennial of 1889 helped consolidate the Third Republic (and was marked by a world Exposition centered on the newly built Eiffel Tower). Yet in the end, such attempts have always run up against the quasi-mystical concept of "revolution" first enunciated by the Jacobins themselves: an all-encompassing transformation in which the whole world is simultaneously undone and redone. The historian Jules Michelet saw a break in human history: "Time no longer existed, time had perished." To French ears, the word "Revolution" encompasses the ensemble of attempts to reshape France in the late 18th century—including the Terror, whose deeply troubling ambiguity resists any attempt at easy commemoration. To celebrate only a particular cross section of them is impossible.

The Revolution's intrinsic complexity and ambiguity help explain the malaise surrounding the bicentennial, but there's another problem: the France many people credit the Revolution with creating is dead. Until quite recently, 1789 was the automatic starting point for almost any analysis of French society and politics. In particular, the Revolution seemed to furnish the key to "French exceptionalism": those peculiarities of state organization and social structure that manifestly set France apart from its neighbors. Yet now, according to a slew of social scientists, France's social and political peculiarities have largely disappeared. And with the "end of French exceptionalism" (both the title of a colloquium last year at NYU and the subtitle of *The Republic of the Center*), the Revolution itself seems newly and strangely remote from current concerns.

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Henri Mendras, a sociologist, lays out these social changes most forcefully in *The Second French Revolution: 1965-1984*. "We are," Mendras contends, "witnessing the collapse of the world that was built in the 19th century over the ruins of the Old Regime." The principal social classes, institutions, and cultural patterns that emerged from the first revolution have all either vanished or evolved beyond recognition. The old independent peasantry, which survived longer than anywhere else in Western Europe, has shriveled. The *rentier* bourgeoisie has fragmented, and lost its old hostility to entrepreneurship. The Catholic Church has suffered a spectacular decline, losing nearly half the regular clergy in a single seven-year period. The tremendous centralization of French society, which

VIVE LA TÉLÉ

First it was Jerry Lewis, and now it's Dan Rather. For some mysterious reason, every morning at 8 o'clock, thousands of Frenchmen now pass up coffee and croissant at the corner café to watch a subtitled version of the "CBS Evening News." Broadcast until recently without a single commercial to slow him down, Monsieur *Razzer* has been conducting the French viewer through a 78 rpm tour of the American psyche in 20 hair-raising minutes of drug epidemics, hostage takings, and presidential gaffes—all of which leaves the contrast between the two national styles of TV journalism perfectly clear. Next to his relaxed, slightly disheveled French colleagues, M. Razzer looks like a java-junkie in a neck brace. By American standards the French anchors look like UHF amateurs: their ties are askew, they slouch, they lisp, they click their pens. And the camera work resembles that phony "home movie" style now used in U.S. rock videos and beer commercials.

What the French lack in aesthetic mastery of the medium they make up for with a confident journalistic professionalism. Government ministers regularly appear next to the anchorman, prepared for apparently extemporaneous discussions. At times the questions and answers are insipid, but usually both parties acquit themselves with dignity—like Koppel or MacNeil or Lehrer on a good night. But what one misses on the French news, and in French journalism generally, is investigative reporting. Journalism is not considered an adversarial profession here, and among television journalists the aversion to conflict is especially strong because the national stations have only recently been taken out of direct government control. Within recent memory ministers were known to kill stories they didn't like. Reporters are thought to be free from that fear today, but that hasn't unleashed any French Mike Wallaces. Polite, respectful, not out to trap, the French TV journalist is clearly the weaker in any interview with public officials.

Another cause of journalistic timidity is what the French themselves call the *nomenklatura* factor. In a centralized, bourgeois country like this the reporters inevitably come from the same social milieu as the politicians and have an inbred sympathy for the difficulties faced by *Monsieur le Ministre*. More and more, journalists even come from the same Parisian preparatory schools and the *grandes écoles* that produce most of the high government functionaries. The very best students are offered jobs in government; the ones just below them become journalists. American TV journalists, by contrast, are usually more famous than the politicians they hunt. What U.S. anchorman ever regretted not having studied harder in school so he could have become assistant undersecretary of agriculture?

The closest French television comes to attacking politicians is through satire. One of the most popular new items on French TV is the "Bebêtes Show," a ten-minute daily puppet show that precedes the evening news on one of the private stations. It has already had its effect on political vocabulary. Today, when one invokes the name of Dieu, the French know you are referring to Mitterrand, who on "Bebêtes" is played by a giant green frog of that name. Communist leader Marchais is a female pig, dressed in a gown and pearls; Prime Minister Rocard is a vulture; conservative leader Raymond Barre is a moronic Yogi Bear; and the right-wing hate-monger Le Pen is a fanged peasant girl. The show is very up-to-date and great fun to watch—so fun, in fact, that politicians have been reported to leave cocktail parties early to see "themselves" and what they did that day on "Bebêtes." A sure sign, of course, that no one feels the least bit threatened.

How long this distinctive French television style can last is another question. Ever since the French government began deregulating stations (France has six channels now, only two of which are public), French television has been drifting. Confused government policy—alternating between heavy regulation and laissez-faire vulgarization—will soon be jolted by another revolution. The streets of Paris are currently being torn up to install cable TV lines that will bring French viewers the BBC and CNN, and, after the pan-European deregulations of 1992, an unlimited supply of intercultural trash (to add to the mass of dubbed American miniseries now available).

Already the cracks in the French television industry are beginning to show. A few months ago workers at several stations went on strike to protest salary inequities. The trouble started over Christine Ockrent, the most Americanized of the French newsreaders: well coiffed, impeccably dressed, and *very* much in control. Ockrent had moved from public to private television awhile ago, but was then rehired at the public Channel 2 at the unprecedented salary of over $200,000. Peanuts to Dan Razzer, of course, but other public TV journalists were making around $30,000, and the Ockrent deal refreshed their trade-union instincts. Screens were blank for several days. The strike eventually fizzled out, but there will be others—until the French decide whether they really want a private television market, and all that entails.

MARK LILLA

Mark Lilla is currently living and watching TV in Paris.

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traditionally shunted the tiniest local decisions through Parisian ministries, has begun to relax in the wake of Socialist reforms. Above all, Mendras detects a loosening in French society's traditionally rigid notions of hierarchy and authority, and as a result, less social conflict.

STILL MORE striking than these changes is the end of exceptionalism in French political life. If the French Revolution invented modern ideological politics as a whole, it nonetheless bequeathed a very peculiar version to France itself. The Revolution never came up with reasonable criteria for political legitimacy. Furet has pointed out that its principal actors, influenced both by Rousseau and the legacy of the absolute monarchy, assumed that sovereign power was indivisible: the People spoke with a single voice. The ideas of representation, a stable party system, and a "loyal opposition" developed very slowly. Revolutionary and postrevolutionary regimes alike had difficulty distinguishing opposition from treason, while for themselves, unpopularity quickly translated into a complete loss of legitimacy.

As a result, politics perennially fueled hopes of a new moment of revolutionary élan, a new occasion for the people to join in mystical union and reshape the nation at a single stroke. France could not escape, as Tocqueville put it, from "a passion so undisciplined and untutored by experience, so easily discouraged, cowed, and vanquished, so superficial and short-lived."

Yet now even that passion is gone. French politics is in a state of near-complete ideological exhaustion. Almost alone in Western Europe, France no longer possesses a significant radical left that might find new inspiration in the events of 1789. The groups most susceptible to radical left politics in other European countries (teachers, social workers, low-ranking health care workers and civil servants) have here stayed with their traditional representatives, the pro-NATO, pro-nuclear Socialists. And while some factions of the ruling Socialist party remain loyal to the old rhetoric, for the most part the red flag has faded to a wan pink.

The greatest ferment in the realm of political ideas comes not from the left, but from free market liberals who want to separate the state from civil society. The phrase "civil society" itself falls from every politician's lips. Meanwhile, the Fifth Republic enjoys unprecedented legitimacy. President François Mitterrand, the Socialist who once bitterly opposed the powerful Fifth Republic executive invented by and for Charles de Gaulle, now plays the role like a maestro. Equally important, Mitterrand has presided over three peaceful "alternations" of power between left and right (in 1981, 1986, and 1988). Even the unprecedented abstention rates in various 1988 elections (a record 62 percent for November's referendum on New Caledonia) have not called the Republic itself into question.

Finally, the cornerstone of France's political exceptionalism, its sense of a French national mission, has cracked. The Revolutionary armies that ripped up the 18th-century map of Europe did so in the name of the Rights of Man, making France a self-proclaimed beacon of liberty. Later, as these battle cries faded, France gave itself a "civilizing mission" in the Maghreb and Black Africa. And in the 1960s Charles de Gaulle summed up France's special role in the single word "grandeur," implying that despite the loss of an empire and the new geopolitical balance, France would continue to behave as a great power. This is one aspect of the Gaullist style that Mitterrand has not imitated, and the notion of a national mission has now slipped from sight, leaving only a few inchoate ripples of discontent. As the *libéral* writer Pierre Manent has observed, "France has still not found a new principle of action, a new idea of itself to think about, and as much as possible, to love." From this point of view, France's inability to redefine its Revolution coincides with a fundamental inability to redefine itself.

In the wake of these changes, it is not surprising that the French media have been paying more attention to the evolution of Western Europe as a whole than to the historical peculiarities of the French nation. On the eve of the bicentennial, the date most often seen in French headlines is not 1789, but 1992, the year in which the "European single market" will become a reality. Symbolically, last November saw the transfer of the remains of Jean Monnet, architect of the European Community, to the Pantheon, a shrine of French republican nationalism that houses "the great men of the *patrie*." The flag most in evidence at the proceedings was not the revolutionary tricolor, but the blue and gold banner of Europe.

AND SO, the French Revolution is being "buried." Indeed, for the first time, some mainstream politicians have been asking if it is *worth* treating 1789 as the central date in France's long history. The neo-Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac, the mayor of Paris, effectively scotched Mitterrand's hopes for a 1989 Parisian Exposition to match that of 1889. Then as prime minister "cohabitating" with Mitterrand between 1986 and 1988, he presided over a halfhearted effort to create a rival anniversay—the 1,000th birthday of the French monarchy in 987. To this end, the government even produced a commemorative ten-franc coin adorned with fleurs-de-lis. The St. Nicolas du Chardonnet crowd loved it.

But 987 has already been forgotten, and this year's show must go on. 1789 will be written about, marketed, and broadcast until everyone is thoroughly sick of it. Come July 14, warplanes will swoop over the Champs-Elysées, fireworks will explode over the Seine (the largest display in history, we are told), and Parisians will have the chance to storm a giant cardboard mockup of the Bastille. Yet hoopla by itself does not amount to a true commemoration, or a reaffirmation of the past. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, the abolition of privilege, the unprecedented attempts to create a just society, and above all the simple example of a people seizing their own destiny—all these things deserve bicentennials of their own. In the France of 1989, though, that sort of anniversary has yet to materialize. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

An End and a Beginning

Max von Sydow disappears for periods of time in clouds of dreadful films, mostly American; then he reappears in a performance so fine that it makes us ache for the time he spent in trash. Now, after another period in the pits, this Swedish actor appears in a Danish film, *Pelle the Conqueror*, with a performance that seems hewn out of late 19th-century European history.

Pelle the Conqueror
(Miramax)

Martin Andersen Nexø's novel of that name (which I haven't read, only read about) is described as a four-volume work about the boyhood, youth, and adult life of a farmer's son who becomes a trade unionist and a labor leader. The director and screen adapter, Bille August, has concentrated on the first volume (published in 1906), which tells of the emigration from Sweden to Denmark of the 12-year-old Pelle with his father, Lasse: of their lives as workers on a large Danish farm; and of Pelle's departure, leaving the farm and his father to venture into the world. Von Sydow of course plays Lasse, and from our first view of him huddled with his son on the deck of the ship taking them across the Baltic, we're suffused with a lovely double feeling, absolute verity of detail and of spirit. What confidence we feel in him, from the first glimpse.

After the death of Lasse's wife, he has headed with his boy for the supposed richer pickings in Denmark. His rosiest dreams are of coffee in bed on Sunday mornings and roast pork with raisins on holidays. When they disembark along with other Swedes looking for work, the Danish farm foremen are waiting, and in a scene reminiscent of Thomas Hardy, they hire emigrants for a year at a time. No one wants Lasse because he's too old and has a boy. Pelle is alone on the dock when the last possible employer drives up, and Lasse comes out of a shed, walking sideways like a shying horse. Disappointed, he has nipped from his flask to restore his courage. (Von Sydow makes Lasse, slightly drunk, even more Lasse than when sober: it's even more of a commentary on Lasse's life.) This last foreman makes them a meager offer, and Lasse accepts.

The huge farm, which is on the sea, is much like a medieval barony. The workers have their quarters and their mess hall. They deal with the brutal foreman and his snippy assistant; only rarely do they see the owner and his wife, who are in the manor house. Lasse and Pelle are given living quarters in a small room in the barn next to the cows—actually, I can testify, a quite warm place to be in winter—and there they make their life together, celebrate Pelle's birthday, deal with their small victories and their larger defeats. (In every one of their barn scenes, flies crawl on them, sometimes other bugs. No credit is given to the prop man in charge of insects.)

The seasons roll at the farm—the filmmakers spent seven months there—and the story rolls with inevitability yet with integral surprises. The film chronicle has the broad flow and contrasting eddies of a big novel. Some highlights: the tyranny of the foreman; the lecherousness of the owner; the gypsy-like woman who sometimes shouts at the front door of the manor house, dragging along her and the owner's mentally defective son; the cries and moans of the owner's wife heard from the manor house; the doomed love affair of a farm girl and a neighbor youth; the teasing of Pelle at his school because, presumably, he speaks Danish with a Swedish accent; the moment when Pelle is whipped by the assistant foreman and Lasse is afraid to come to his aid; Pelle's comprehension and forgiveness of his father. And work, work, work.

Two elements need special mention. A woman who lives nearby, modestly well off, is the presumptive widow of a fisherman who hasn't returned from a voyage. She sets her cap for Lasse, who visits her many evenings; a marriage, which will fix both Lasse and Pelle quite nicely, is in prospect. Then the husband reappears. Also: among the farm crew is a free-spirited man who is remaining only long enough to get some cash in hand so that he can go to America. He promises to take Pelle with him. But the man is severely injured, and that escape route, too, is closed to the boy.

Events at last resolve him to leave, and Lasse, aware that he is too old to go with him and too fearful to start still another life, accepts that he and his son must part. The moment of farewell is in the middle of a snowy field. They shake hands, and Pelle turns toward the world he will conquer. It's a moment much like the finish of Jan Troell's *Here's Your Life*.

The peculiar hold of *Pelle the Conqueror* is that it seems to situate us a bit above the earth, watching it turn and watching the course of numerous lives for a year. August compels this feeling with his clear attitude of service to the book. I've seen only one previous film of his, *Twist and Shout*, a mod youth piece that gave no hint of this new film's quality, espe-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Accused. A bitter title. A woman is gang-raped in a tavern and finds even more horror by bringing charges. Jodie Foster is the victim, Kelly McGillis the prosecutor. Much of it is vivid. (Reviewed 11/21/88)

Buster. English perfect-crime story—factual: the Great Bank Robbery of 1963—vitalized by good acting and unusual character traits. (12/19/88)

A Cry in the Dark. Meryl Streep, reincarnated *again*, as the mother of a murdered infant in a celebrated Australian case. It's all touched with antipodean remoteness but is made with skill. (12/5/88)

Hotel Terminus. Marcel Ophuls's latest documentary examines Klaus Barbie's life, especially after the Second World War. Overlong but a lot of it is too grim to be called ironic. (10/24/88)

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cially the courage not to be formally innovative, only to be good. His cinematographer is Jorgen Persson, who did *Elvira Madigan* and who here deals more sensitively with the muck of farm life than he did with the conscious poetics of the earlier film. The plodding through the mud feels primal. The winter chills us, most especially when a small boat floats through the ice to shore, containing two seated statues, two fishermen frozen stiff and coated with ice.

Crowning all is the large company of actors that August has assembled. Every one of them, with no smallest flicker of reserve, is absolutely perfect in his or her part. The word "part" takes on an added meaning; they all seem proud to be taking part in the filming of this book. Nexø's novel, still (I'm told) widely read in Europe, belongs to the national treasure, and everyone, by playing his or her part to the fullest, is honoring that treasure.

Thus it's no surprise that Pelle is played by a boy named Pelle Hvenegaard, who was named for the book's hero. Believe, if you like, that one reason young Hvenegaard was chosen was the aptness of his name; nonetheless this Pelle is excellent as the first Pelle—proud, fearful, secretive, hungry. August has worked well with him, and he was doubtless also helped by the actor with whom he has most of his scenes, von Sydow.

Older in every way than when he played a somewhat comparable role in Troell's two-part work, *The Emigrants* and *The New Land*, von Sydow here has, almost literally, a supporting role—large and sturdy but supportive of the protagonist, Pelle. Unlike the farmer in Troell's films, Lasse is not only an emigrant from Sweden but a refugee from ambition and from courage. He works, and he sees not much further ahead than just working. (Note von Sydow's hands—they are as weathered as his face, and he uses them as a manual laborer would.) He lives for his son, with no self-sacrificial weepiness but with a farmer's knowledge that one generation passes and another one rises and the new can be stronger.

In his performance of this supporting role, von Sydow supports the idea of truth as only actors can signify it. To von Sydow, Lasse seems merely one of the billions of manifestations of human life at the time he is alive but therefore important, therefore unique. So this performance is more than wonderful acting, it is a profession of faith in acting. □

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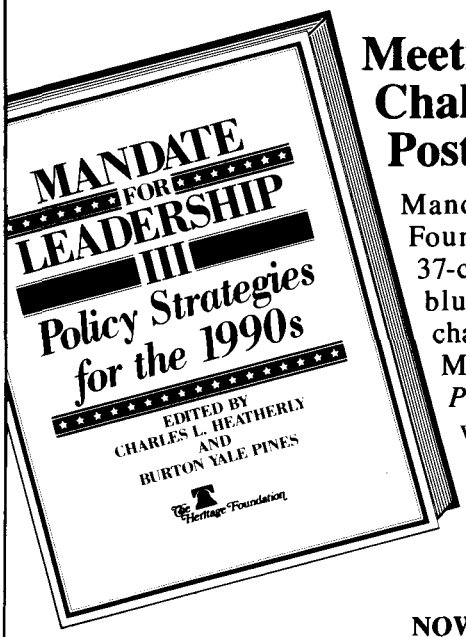
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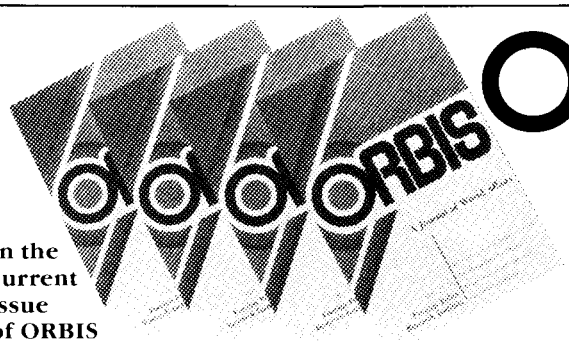

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GRAHAM CRACKER

The Captain and the Enemy by Graham Greene

(Viking, 189 pp., $17.95)

Within living memory, broad-chested and vigorous John Bull has become the skulking and down-at-heel Englishman who feels sorry for himself. How was it possible to have engineered poverty and called it socialism? How was it possible to have turned one's back on millions of needy people abroad and called it decolonization? Graham Greene is not answerable for developments of this kind, but as the most prestigious and long-living writer of his generation, he did more than his fair share to generate the atmosphere that seemed to justify decay and doom. He has uniquely romanticized failure. A future Gibbon will quarry Greene's collected works for *The Decline and Fall of Great Britain*.

To feel sorry for oneself is perhaps a natural failing in whoever supposes that he is losing status and power. In Greene's best years, it is true, defeatism stalked the land. Still, it was never necessary to accept this as the one and only reality of the time, appeasing rather than resisting. Self-pity of Greene's variety is objectionable on account of the plea for privilege contained within it; the self-pitier begs for allowance to be made for his circumstances, to be excused the consequences of his actions, to be held unaccountable for any generalizations from his views, to be left to enjoy exemptions and double standards.

Greene's popularity arose from the skill and single-mindedness with which he made special pleas for those failures that are easy to identify with emotively: unhappy childhood, love that has soured, a sense of being hemmed in or hunted by a bully, a society in which the powers that be are indifferent or brutish. His characters fall into two narrow ranges. There are the tormented boys and persecuted underdogs, and the unscrupulous adults from a genuine or would-be upper crust. The latter are the agents and patients of a society that cannot help producing cruelty, and to which allegiance could not possibly be due. Of course, those who are comfortable and safe are enormously flattered to see themselves as victims. Evelyn Waugh, who preferred the hard road of reality that might end in a masterpiece, kept a close eye on Greene, and was the first to note the strategy of his rival: "His early books are full of self-pity at poverty and obscurity; now self-pity at his successes."

Poverty and obscurity were alike imaginary, without significance. Brewers since the 18th century, the Greene family was lodged securely at the top of British society. (In 1984, to celebrate Greene's 80th birthday, the family brewery marketed 100,000 bottles of a light ale bearing his name.) Greene's father was headmaster of Berkhamsted, an ancient public school, and close relations included senior and respected civil servants. His mother's first cousin was Robert Louis Stevenson. At Balliol, one of the most distinguished Oxford colleges, Greene's contemporaries included Cyril Connolly, Peter Quennell, and Harold Acton, destined all to take their place in the establishment.

In memoirs and diaries of the day, Greene crops up in the company of his peers, in Jamaica with Noel Coward, in Capri with Gracie Fields, at a lunch in the Greek Embassy in honor of Queen Frederika of Greece, staying in country houses with the rich and titled. Following the publication of his first novel in 1929, Ottoline Morrell wrote to congratulate him, and to take him up. Waugh proposed him for White's Club, a stronghold of the landed aristocracy, and Greene gladly accepted his election. For years he lived in Albany, the most famous and exclusive building of its kind in central London, and had a house in Italy. In 1966 Greene moved to France, to the fashionable Boulevard Malesherbes in Paris, and to Antibes.

These rewards and graces accord deservedly with Greene's standing and industry. *The Captain and the Enemy* is his 23rd novel, almost his 50th book, coming after travel books, plays and film scripts, children's books, short stories, a biography, critical essays, much and varied journalism spread over the past six decades. Here (and in huge sales worldwide in all major languages) is proof of what can be achieved by a professional who does his thousand words a day. He has received the Order of Merit and the Companion of Honour. Is it victimization to have been denied the Nobel Prize? A member of the Swedish jury is rumored to be particularly obstructive.

The interplay of underdogs and bullies provided "the usual Left-wing scenery," as George Orwell long ago summarized Greene's fiction. Greene's characteristic division between a "good" side and a "bad" side comes straight from the Age of Dictators. The cold war offered the ideal context in which to enlarge "the usual Left-wing scenery." Greene exploited it tirelessly to project a long series of admirable and stalwart underdogs, often (though not exclusively) Marxists, always wrongfully persecuted by an equally long series of American bullies, with here and there a chinless British wonder. Some of the American bullies are especially destructive because they do not have the wit to perceive what they are doing.

Throughout the years Greene has been one of the most voluble critics of the West, seizing upon what he takes to be evidence of folly and wickedness in the democracies and publicizing it in books and articles and interviews (or, *faute de mieux*, by means of a barrage of letters to the press). No writer outside the Communist Party has led such a campaign against the West, or found such justification for the Soviet Union. Greene is sincere. His projection of the cold war years is pure melodrama, but he has come to believe it absolutely. He supposes himself to be on the run, defending the good from the bad, an innocent who is right to feel sorry for himself.

At Oxford in 1922, under the influence of Claud Cockburn, Greene joined the Communist Party, only to leave it for the Catholic Church. Catholicism inhibited him from romancing either side in the Spanish Civil War. He began his political tourism, instead, in Mexico. First-hand experience of the persecution of the Catholic Church there led to *The Lawless Roads* in 1939. In that idiosyncratic book of reportage, he described local anti-clerical and Communist barbarities, and a day came when he hated the Mexicans. Changes of regime, he saw, would not mean changes of heart. A culture was at work in which a few fought to give orders, and everyone else obeyed: "In Mexico there were always other generals." The democratic alternative, as exemplified by passing American tourists or businessmen, might even be worse,

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"just the drugstore and the Coca-Cola, the hamburger, the sinless empty graceless chromium world."

Had that limited and melodramatic characterization in any way approximated the reality of democracy, the Second World War might have gone hard indeed. Was Nazism (or Communism) to be resisted for Coca-Cola? Once more, Greene's disparagement amounts to self-pitying regret that what he held to be unattractive was so visible before his fastidious eyes. Afterward, in London as the war was beginning, he published an essay to proclaim that life under German bombing was just and poetic. "The innocent will be given their peace, and the unhappy will know more happiness than they have ever dreamed about, and poor muddled people will be given an answer they have to accept. We needn't feel pity for any of the innocents." To be deprived of the empty chromium world was really a stroke of luck. This was another typical, patronizing measurement of reality by standards of artifice and romance.

For the rest of the war, Greene was away in Sierra Leone, as a member of MI6, the foreign branch of the Intelligence service. He rose in MI6 to become a friend and subordinate of Kim Philby, then not yet suspected of being a traitor. With the onset of the cold war, the British establishment had to rethink its position; the balance of power had shifted against it. Much influential opinion maintained that America was seeking a historic revenge by deliberately supplanting the British presence in the world. Some refined the proposition to argue that the British presence had become an anachronism, and ought to be brought to an end no matter what the consequences. Finally a few believed that exquisite British pink was best deepened on the map into progressive Soviet red. (Philby was a displaced power-hungry imperialist of that type.) No sort of thinker, Greene borrowed according to his mood from all these reactions to political flux.

British and French measures of defense against Communist or nationalist insurgents seemed foolish to Greene. Written with the added authority of someone once on the inside, *Our Man in Havana* and *The Human Factor* are novels celebrating the bankruptcy of British intelligence in its efforts at defense. Such efforts were a waste of energy, evidence only that the innocent were persecuted and the upper crust unscrupulous. In Malaya, Greene found himself feeling sometimes "a measure of compassion" for the Communist guerrillas, who apparently overcame their sexual passions in the jungle and wrote poetry. Colonialist planters, by contrast, drank and attended Scottish dinners with "A Wee Bit Haggis." In Kenya during the Mau Mau disturbances, Greene caricatured British attitudes toward the Kikuyu with the words, "It was as though Jeeves had taken to the jungle," while Dedan Kimathi, who bound his followers to him with ceremonies of blood-letting and bestiality with goats, was smoothed away with the observation that "over and over again one was moved by the simplicity of this savage enemy." In Vietnam, it was embarrassing to lunch with the French General de Lattre de Tassigny, who was a loser, and clownish enough, besides, to inquire whether Greene was still a spy. What a pleasure it was, therefore, to take tea not long afterward with Ho Chi Minh, who was a winner, and to congratulate himself on having in his pocket a small silver cocktail shaker from Asprey's.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The fellow traveler must be selective in what he reports and admits. If the Soviets have actually done anything that can be criticized, he must maintain that the West has done the same to an even more harmful degree, and therefore that the Soviet fault is excusable. Greene is a master of these false equations. What he likes to call "British tortures" in Ulster, for example, seem to him on a footing with Stalinist show trials, "which we had been so quick to condemn." In 1968, in a preface to Philby's memoirs, Greene likened him to a Catholic in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, as if the Tudor religious wars somehow resembled Stalinism. In the Soviet Union in 1986, Greene thanked his hosts in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of September 10 for "the warm welcome I have received in the U.S.S.R." and went on to enthuse over his old friend Philby. "I personally feel a great admiration for him, for the consistency with which he came to his new convictions and defended them in the struggle against fascism." Struggling against fascism, yes, in the years when the Soviet Union was fighting Hitler; but in fact Philby was betraying his own democratic, anti-fascist country.

In Prague early in 1948, Greene depicted the Soviet coup as a farce, during the course of which he was obliged to sleep on a sofa and to scrounge food with diplomats in a hotel basement. He

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asks now, "Who could have foretold on that fantastic night the Slansky trial, all the Stalin horrors, the brief spring, and then Dubček and Smrkovsky dragged as prisoners to Moscow?" The answer is, anybody sober and unromantic enough to have taken the trouble to look at Soviet reality. Nor was it any bother to visit Poland as the guest of Pax, the front organization erected by the Communist Party to try to control the Catholic Church; or to state in public that East Berlin was preferable to West Berlin. He summed it all up in a letter to the London *Times* in September 1967: "If I had to choose between life in the Soviet Union and life in the United States, I would certainly choose the Soviet Union."

Freedom, tolerance, pluralism, wealth are things Greene takes for granted for himself; the airplane ticket in his pocket permits him to turn his back safely on totalitarianism. Analysis consists, for Greene, in outburst. He has no understanding of the political or historical processes that have led the United States to occupy its position in the world. His criticism of America is, at bottom, aesthetic. It expresses a superior distaste, a revulsion at people who do not know the correct forms of behavior.

Americans, as Greene put it in *The Quiet American*, are "big, noisy, boyish and middle-aged." One of this type proved "an emblematic statue of all I thought I hated in America." That particular novel helped to cast over American action in Vietnam a taint, an air of superciliousness, which became widespread. (The character of certain American actions helped, too.) The Communist victory led to persecution, and eventually to the boat people, which was as predictable as the events in Czechoslovakia. In 1971 Greene could write, "South Vietnam has suffered under the Japanese and the French, it has suffered under President Diem and his successors. It has suffered under the Americans, but when has it 'once' suffered under communism?" Reproved by a critic, he replied that the Communists had merely been fighting a civil war, adding defensively, and with the fellow traveler's usual glibness, "Why do supporters of the Pentagon always write of men, women, and children being 'butchered' in a communist offensive, and yet the poor victims of an American offensive become merely 'casualties'?"

FOR SOME YEARS now, events in Latin America have dominated his writings. The perception that in this culture "there were always other generals" has been put out of mind. Greene takes particular pride in "my friend Fidel Castro," giving accounts of meals and audiences with him in Havana, pointing out to admiring interviewers which pictures in the Antibes apartment were gifts from Fidel. "I'd still fight for Cuba," he was declaring in 1969. Cuban intervention in Angola, he asserted, was not Soviet-sponsored, but an independent and justified initiative of Castro's.

His advocacy of the Sandinistas, in particular, is passionate and unqualified. As with the Czechs in 1948, then with the Vietnamese, so now he doubts whether the Sandinistas are Marxist-Leninists. Once again he finds no reason to foresee (at this late date, no reason even to speculate) that the future might bring horrors. In 1986 he wrote that "the key positions of foreign affairs, health and education and culture are all held by Catholic priests." The Archbishop is opposed to the Sandinistas, to be sure, but "the church does not belong to the Archbishop, it belongs to the Catholic people. . . . There are Marxists in the Government, yes, but Marxism is an economic theory not a heresy."

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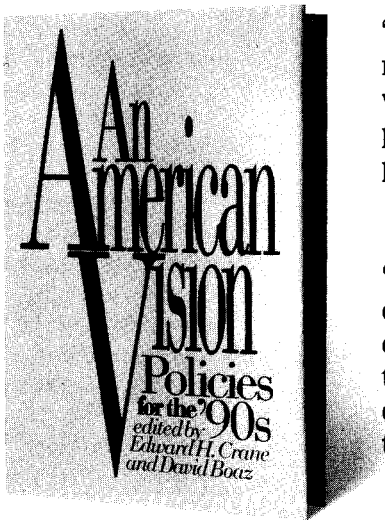

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One pronouncement after another reveals his distance from reality. "I would have thought that Nicaragua was the first Latin American country under authoritarian rule (Somoza supported by the United States), to have reverted by revolution in the direction of democracy." And there is no persecution of churchgoers in Nicaragua because "I have attended Mass in Managua and I have seen religious celebrations in the streets of León and Catholic posters along the main roads." Speaking little or no Spanish, Greene nonetheless knows that the Miskito Indians were removed by the Sandinistas for their own good: a Maryknoll nun told him so. She may have been the only American whose word was good enough for Greene.

The lengths to which Greene goes to quarrel with American representatives are childish, provoking the authorities, for example, to refuse him entry visas, resigning from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and so on. Under the Freedom of Information Act, he obtained his file of 45 pages, of which 16 had been inked out. This the great dissenter sold at public auction. Once again masking the truth about recurrent and very tangible royalties, he wrote to the London *Times* to wonder "whether it might be worth my while to obtain a second installment and later a third one, a good means of earning a livelihood in old age."

"TO BE praised was agony . . . the excitement was overshadowed by the knowledge of failure. . . . I belong on the side of the victims." Culled at random from his autobiographical writings, phrases like these fly by the score in the face of truth. On the side of the victims, in Antibes? Knowledge of failure, with royalties paid from all over the world in a country with tax concessions for writers, in White's Club?

Greene's self-serving fantasies were evident in *J'Accuse*, a pamphlet he published in 1982 about a private family matter. Greene's long-standing companion had a daughter married to a young man now accused of being a small-time local crook. Greene claimed that in the divorce proceedings of this couple, and then in custodial arrangements for their children, the authorities had conspired at a miscarriage of justice. Once he had supposed that the CIA might murder him in Central America; now he intimated that he might be gunned down on the Riviera. For this, Zola's title! (Later Greene inveighed in the press against the purchase by an American publishing house of his publishers in London, whose chairman was his nephew. On the side of the victims, browbeating his own relative in the correspondence columns?)

GREENE'S recent novels have been built upon fantasies too large and too improbable to sustain a narrative: the wrong man appointed a monsignor; a bank manager caught up in the travels of his aunt with a war criminal in Latin America; a man who pays another to go in his stead before a firing squad; a millionaire who tests his dinner guests by placing on their plates crackers with expensive gifts inside, with the exception of one containing an explosive device. *The Captain and the Enemy* also has no contact with observable life.

The new book is, not surprisingly, a document of self-pity. A 12-year-old boy is at the mercy of unscrupulous adults. At his English public school, this boy is confronted by a stranger, the Captain, who is an aging and inept confidence trickster. The Captain explains that he and the boy's father have played backgammon, and that the boy is the reward for the winner. Listening without demur, the boy leaves school to settle for years in a dim basement with the Captain and his mistress. The book's detail—currency, architecture, conduct—derives from pre-1914 England. *The Captain and the Enemy* evokes not another nightmare from childhood, but anachronism. As though by means of a time machine, the scene switches to contemporary Panama, where the Captain is now flying guns to the Sandinistas. "The Enemy" are the Americans and their stooges, who have a hand in the Captain's death as he crashes his aircraft onto Somoza's bunker in Managua. The boy, ostensibly aged 22 at this point, is left to conclude, "I'm on my own now."

Unfortunately, local changes have caught Greene on the hop. Where it was once right for the Panama of Torrijos to resist America, it is wrong for the Panama of Noriega to do the same. (The writer Lee Langley has noticed Greene's attempt to reverse out of another bind of a similar sort. In *Brighton Rock*, published in 1938, when anti-Semitism was all the rage, the criminal character was "a small dark Jew with a neat round belly" and had "Semitic features." In post-war editions of the novel, however, this has been amended to "a small dark man" whose features have become "Italianate.")

The Captain says of himself that he had been a prisoner of war of the Germans. Apparently he had nothing more than a dictionary to read at the time, as a result of which words like "fuliginous" and "glabrous" feature in his vocabulary. This heavy-handed joke is all there is to humanize the character, to support the complete reversal of role whereby this rather miserable liar and cheat somehow acquires an aircraft, as well as the skill and the determination to fly it to a heroic death. Nor can the Enemy be considered particularly outrageous in wanting to keep tabs on this weird figure in their midst.

Panama and its politics, in short, have been grafted onto a fiction of an antique England in the attempt yet again to match "bad" bullies against "good" underdogs. Melodrama, again, is the result of this willful ordering of the world. It seems that even the slightest evocation of an English boyhood leads Greene's imagination directly to the wicked wilds of the CIA. By now America has been distorted to serve as a superior force, or more to the point, as a horrid father figure, in whose light he can justifiably feel sorry for himself.

IF GRAHAM GREENE had lived in the heyday of British power, he might have had confidence in his gift for story-telling. As things were, he claimed the privileges customary to wealth and freedom while feeling free to ignore the customary responsibilities. In this respect, he spoke for many in Britain and elsewhere who believed that they should be allowed to continue enjoying their ease and safety without paying the price for them. A view of himself and of the world emerges in Greene's work which finds virtue in surrender. Nobody expressed with more literary force the longing to escape painlessly from the totalitarian realities of the '30s and the cold war. Greene's appeasing instincts provided the melodrama upon which his reputation has been built, but those same instincts also ensured that even in his lifetime his work would become a period curiosity.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

David Pryce-Jones's book *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs* will be published in March by Harper & Row.

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THE PRICE OF PESSIMISM

The Limits of Social Policy
by Nathan Glazer

(Harvard University Press, 240 pp., $22.95)

Its intellectual influence remains, but neoconservatism has virtually disappeared as a political phenomenon. As Seymour Martin Lipset recently pointed out, neoconservatism in the United States was never a movement, but a "tendency." Indeed, it became at least two tendencies, which have now turned away from, and even against, each other.

The original neoconservatism drew its coherence from a common reaction to currents of change in the 1960s that could be summed up in one word: Stop. Neoconservatives called for a reassertion of bourgeois virtues, and they opposed the newer egalitarian demands of the left. Unlike traditional conservatives, however, they were not against modernism in the arts, nor were they opposed to the New Deal. Rather than despising the social sciences, they drew heavily upon them. Though they prized traditional values, they did so less out of religious faith than from a belief in their positive social effects. Perhaps because many were Jews and former socialists, they appeared to bring conservativism a new set of intellectual resources. Peter Steinfels, in a 1979 book called *The Neoconservatives*, credited them with creating the intellectually serious conservativism that America, according to Lionel Trilling, had always lacked.

Until the mid-1970s, neoconservatives had emphasized caution and complexities, and were primarily concerned with domestic issues. But a second tendency, led by Norman Podhoretz and Jeane Kirkpatrick, became increasingly concerned with foreign policy and took an intensely ideological, highly polarized view of the world. Irving Kristol may have been unique in bridging the two wings (it was he who first accepted the term "neoconservatism" and sought to present it as a complete public philosophy), but the two tendencies have split irreparably in the last decade.

For whatever unity neoconservatism had in the face of the radical challenge of the '60s and '70s, it lost in the ascendancy of the '80s. Some of its leaders, especially from the foreign policy wing, threw in their lot with the larger conservative movement and joined the Reagan administration. Thereupon they sacrificed some of their distinctiveness, and the line between the old conservatism and the new became a blur. Moreover, not all neoconservatives, especially on the domestic side, could go from saying "no" to radicalism to saying "yes" to Reaganism. A few, like Daniel Patrick Moynihan, repositioned themselves in the mainstream of the Democratic Party. Podhoretz, by contrast, passed Reagan on the right, when East-West relations began to thaw and the president decided the Soviet Union was no longer an "evil empire." Neither events nor arguments discredited neoconservatism. It simply lost any clarity of definition as the preoccupations of one decade gave way to those of the next.

The triumph of Thatcher and Reagan also stirred general confusion about the concept of neoconservatism. In the '80s some observers began to use the term "neoconservative" to describe the resurgent devotion to the free market. That usage makes sense in Great Britain, since Thatcher represents something genuinely "neo" among British conservatives. But the older lines of American conservatism did not recently become converted to faith in the marketplace. Moreover, the original American neoconservatives, though skeptical about government, did not celebrate Friedrich von Hayek or Milton Friedman as patron saints. Their social science was primarily sociology, not economics; and they approved of welfare state measures that Friedmanites abhor. Increasingly, however, some putative neoconservatives exhibit many of the familiar peeves and reflexes of the old American right, and only connoisseurs can appreciate the vintages of conservative whine. Neoconservativism appears now to be not the mature American conservativism that Steinfels thought it was, but a transitional moment in the emergence of a larger, rather varied conservative movement that has overtaken American politics and social thought.

And yet there is Nathan Glazer. A dove on foreign policy, Glazer has little in common with the Podhoretz wing, and unlike Kristol he has not, to my knowledge, embraced neoconservatism as a description of his ideas. But if anything remains of the first phase of neoconservatism as a distinctive frame of thought about public policy, it can be found in Glazer's work and the pages of *The Public Interest*, the journal that he and Kristol edit. In the last decade Glazer has maintained the same complex balance of views that he began to develop out of the experience of the '60s. He rejects the liberal vision of an expanding system of social rights and proposes another in its place that relies more on the traditional structures of society to relieve distress. He does not, however, repudiate the welfare state. Indeed, he endorses some measures that would extend it.

His new collection, *The Limits of Social Policy*, presents these views in ten well-turned essays that provide a history, a critique, and a justification—a history of the development of social policy over the last two decades; a critique of the grand designs of reform; and a justification for the limits of social provision in the United States. Unlike many collections, these essays make up a coherent whole, and they invite us to reflect on whether this more moderate vein of neoconservative thinking presents, at its best, a persuasive view.

I should make my bias clear. I count Glazer as a friend; he was my teacher and my colleague. I admire his wisdom, his breadth of interests, his fair-mindedness. His contributions to sociology and public thought, especially his thinking about ethnicity, have been extraordinary, from *The Lonely Crowd* (with David Riesman and Reuel Denney) and *Beyond the Melting Pot* (with Moynihan) to his more recent books, *Affirmative Discrimination* and *Ethnic Dilemmas*. Both personally and in his writing, Glazer shows not only a tolerance for opposing views, but an appreciation of them, which makes it difficult to raise objections that Glazer himself has not already acknowledged. Still, for all my respect, I have never shared the mood and the assumptions of his work on social policy that lead him to be deeply pessimistic about the capacities of government. Much of this disagreement stems from what I see as a tendency to overgeneralize the failings of welfare and welfare reform to the entire sphere of social policy.

In his new book's title essay, which originally appeared in 1971, Glazer builds his argument around a contrast

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between a liberal model of policy and his own alternative. Liberals, he says, see policy as progressively correcting conditions of misery and distress, for which they blame society as a whole and vested interests in particular. Glazer summarizes his perspective in two propositions. First, that in social policy we are "trying to deal with the breakdown of traditional ways of handling distress" that have been located in ethnic groups, neighborhoods, churches, and families. Second, that social policy is actually weakening these traditional structures: "We are making no steady headway.... Our efforts to deal with distress are themselves increasing distress."

SEVERAL THINGS are wrong here. Social policy does not seek only to compensate for the weakening of traditional structures. Through our expenditures for health care, housing, nutrition, and income security, we have been attempting to create a far higher standard of living than those traditional institutions were ever able to reach. By any objective standard, we have made significant headway. The case for success is especially strong in the areas where social expenditures have expanded most: spending for the elderly (including higher real incomes from Social Security) and spending on medical care, which together have significantly improved the quality of life, as well as extending its length. It is simply not true to say, in regard to material well-being, that "efforts to deal with distress are themselves increasing distress."

Moreover, if the traditional structures of society have deteriorated (and I am not certain that all of them have), the principal causes lie in the economic and political freedoms that we revere, and in the forces that they have unleashed. The contribution of social policy to the erosion of tradition seems rather slight by comparison with the impact of what Joseph Schumpeter called our economy's gales of "creative destruction." Capitalism necessarily destroys old industries and occupations and uproots the communities and families that have grown up around them; and the rationalistic outlook that capitalism promotes undercuts the authority of tradition. Laments about "the world we have lost" are centuries old. While the lament has some foundation, it is premised on a vastly exaggerated view of the harmony of traditional life, and of its success in relieving pain and preventing misfortune. Indeed, much evidence suggests that voluntary

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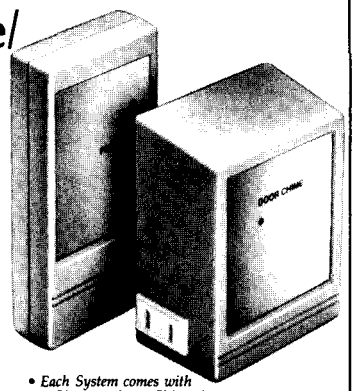

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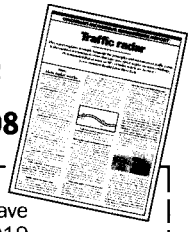

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GIVERNY

Though sometimes, by the end, the form becomes your own
completely. Monet: the last of the lilies

splurge, like dyes in water: furring, tentacling.
Probably so did light in his milkclot eyes.

The more *they* failed, the vaster the beauty
succeeded. Nobody ever saw

such flowers before. Even he didn't
"see" them. It was only after he didn't

we could. Everywhere, suddenly—everywhere!

POEM WITH 2 LINES FROM A CATALOGUE

There is no color inside the body.
Color requires light.

When we peer into the people we love,
when we take our voyeur-stares

past the sills their various
intimate openings offer,

puckering gill, greased x, all labial pouches,
we bring light the way an artist brings a brush

—the strokes
make burgundy, tulip, ruby, kumquat, oxblood, anemone-pink.

DESERT SONG

They tongued my mons—the animals; and
the dank crenellations between my toes. Once
one climbed the rump of another, starting my nipples;
it was very common after that. So over centuries I
was smoothed. To see how much of us gives us our little
individuation, see me then: a crystal
lumpishness, the features gone to creatures' soft, salival
repetitions. Twice a year it rained. By the time
the boy found me, I was the size of a herder's crook,
a thing to twirl, or play at being a spear, and
finally to hurl in the waters. They were also salt.
I've entered air. I've entered you. And when *you* leave,
and if *you* weep, you'll taste what the animals yearned
for; and Lot before them, before I turned.

ALBERT GOLDBARTH

organizations are actually stronger today than they were a century ago, not least of all because of the support they receive from government.

GLAZER'S VISION of an accelerating decline, of eroding traditional structures eroded further by social policy, appears accurate only when focusing on one development: the failure of welfare policy with respect to the black family. As he correctly points out, the growth of Social Security and other programs was supposed to produce two benefits for the public at large: a withering away of welfare and an improvement in the "environment" (reduced crime and civil disorder). Instead, the public saw increases in the welfare rolls, crime, teenage pregnancies, and family break-ups (though these changes were not, by any means, all results of welfare assistance). Furthermore, the remedy favored by reformers, the negative income tax or family assistance plan as it came to be called, proved illusory; it even seemed to increase family break-ups when put to a large, controlled social experiment (or so the early evaluations held).

Welfare is scarcely the pride of reform. But neither is it the paradigmatic case, the sum, or the essence. To say that social policy and "social engineering" faced, and failed, a decisive test in welfare is to make three sacrifices of complexity that might be called the "welfare compression." First, you must reduce social policy to welfare policy—and ignore the other elements that in fiscal terms are far larger (Social Security, health care, and education). Second, you must reduce welfare itself to the experience of long-term welfare recipients—and ignore the larger number of beneficiaries, white and black, for whom welfare provides support during temporary reverses of fortune. Third, you must say that the test of welfare's effects is the development of inner-city black communities over the last 30 years—and ignore the turnover in the inner-city population from the out-migration of millions of upwardly mobile blacks to better neighborhoods and the in-migration of millions more who came from the rural South. If Glazer is prepared to take all the steps in welfare compression, he can draw the conclusion "We are making no steady headway," but it is not a verdict that applies to all social policy, nor to all anti-poverty efforts.

Glazer seems to me entirely right, however, in the criticism that he levels

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against the family assistance plan. The heart of his argument involves a contrast between incentives and the "teaching effects" of programs. Economists thought that by constructing an incentive system that rewarded work, they would induce recipients to get off welfare. (Instead of losing assistance entirely, recipients would collect a diminishing amount as their incomes rose.) But this model neglected the "teaching effect" of a policy that guarantees a minimum income regardless of work or family responsibility. During the last decade, as Glazer points out, welfare policy has been moving from inducements to expectations of work. While indicating his approval for this shift, Glazer does not reject the idea of publicly financed work incentives, as long as the incentives have the right teaching effects. He notes that the earned income tax credit (an existing provision of the federal tax code) creates, like the negative income tax, an incentive for work, but the teaching effect is altogether different, since the credit comes only to those with earnings.

MORE generally, Glazer would like to "reform work, not welfare" by ensuring that low-wage jobs carry fringe benefits, such as health insurance. Like his Harvard colleague David Ellwood, he wants to discourage reliance on welfare by making work pay better. "Reforming work, not welfare," however, is no small objective. It leads toward a substantial extension of the government's role in social provision; and I am not sure it is any less an example of the social engineering for which Glazer expresses a general distaste. Unfortunately, in these essays Glazer does not explain how he would add fringe benefits to low-wage jobs. Mandating private health benefits runs into numerous difficulties, as Massachusetts is discovering. (A universal health insurance system, on the other hand, might be more equitable and less costly, as it is in Canada, but Glazer's view of so large an undertaking is unclear.)

Glazer is generally content here to point in the direction of change he prefers, without working out the specifics. He favors social policies that emphasize decentralization and privatization, but he gives no sustained attention to the difficulties that those policies are likely to meet. For example, he is sympathetic to educational vouchers, he acknowledges some objections to them (such as church-state entanglements, increased racial segregation, and deterioration of the existing public schools), and then he leaves the topic without answering the objections or clarifying exactly what he would do.

So while the essays contain the outline of a positive program, these elements are far less developed than the book's negative, critical side. Indeed, the last several chapters of the book are entirely devoted to criticizing liberal efforts to rationalize and to extend social policy. Glazer's central message is that social policy in America reflects American institutions and beliefs, and no one should expect any fundamental change. In the very last words of the book, he says that the dominant mood in the United States opposes "a fully developed national system of social policy," and that this mood reflects "a considered judgment by many Americans that despite the cost in social disorder that prevails in their society, they prefer it that way." The ultimate limit on social policy, we are led to believe, is public approval for the system, warts and all.

That there are limits to social policy, including complacent opinion, no one need doubt. But some limits are only apparent, and can be overcome. Other limits need not be forbidding, depending on where they lie. In the midst of a glowing blurb on the back cover, Moynihan says: "Yes, there are limits, but they are well beyond our present horizons." Exactly. But the "dominant mood" of this book is that we ran up against the limits of policy 20 years ago. Moynihan adds that "Glazer summons us to try once more, and to do better this time." The book would have been more valuable had Glazer done so, instead of observing, with no apparent disapproval, that confidence in our ability to design effective social policy for the nation has vanished and is unlikely to return soon.

What makes this book neoconservative is its preoccupation with deflating the grand aspirations of the '60s. But if a balloon has burst, there is no fun to be had in deflating it. Neoconservatism seems to have exhausted its original impetus and entertainment. In addition, the record of reform no longer seems so grim. In an essay first published in 1986 and included here, Glazer remarks that the early evaluations of education and training programs for the poor tended to find no impact, whereas the more recent ones have more often shown positive effects. The same is true of evaluations of the impact of health programs. *The Limits of Social Policy* takes its framework from that early period of dispute and disillusionment, when nothing seemed to work, but the book itself contains ingredients of a more positive alternative. Without too much difficulty, those ingredients could be recombined and amplified into a vision that would encourage us, as Moynihan says, "to try once more, and to do better this time." That is very much what we need: the chastened wisdom about the limits of policy that Nathan Glazer has taught, but also the political imagination to see the possibilities of productive reform that lie within our reach.

PAUL STARR

Paul Starr is professor of sociology at Princeton University.

THE WAR OF THE WORDS

In Defense of Rhetoric
by Brian Vickers

(Oxford University Press, 528 pp., $79)

The disappearance of rhetoric from the European intellectual scene is bound to surprise anyone who is curious about our history. This is a body of knowledge concerning the human activity par excellence: the art of speaking (and writing). It enjoyed great prestige for 2,000 years, and then disappeared without apparent trace in the course of the 19th century, at the very time when its object, smooth and effective speech, was beginning to play an ever greater role in our societies. Isn't it paradoxical that the neglect of rhetoric has coincided with the spectacle of the presidential elections in countries like the United States and France, those events of the greatest public importance, in which victory goes invariably to the

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"great communicators" rather than to the politicians themselves?

Those who have studied the history of rhetoric and its inherent intellectual riches have prayed for a rebirth of rhetorical inquiry; Brian Vickers's book is the latest in a long line. But we are still awaiting an answer. How do we explain this anomaly? In part, by the fact that rhetoric has not had only admirers. It has also been the object of many violent attacks that have surely contributed to discrediting it.

RHETORIC IS a double discourse. It presents itself first as an inventory of the forms of language, thus as an extension of grammar—as a description of all the possible ways of deploying words. At the same time, however, it has a didactic function; it teaches us how to produce effective discourse and, more specifically, discourse that engages the conviction of the listener. Rhetoric is simultaneously a form of knowledge and a norm; it prescribes even as it describes.

The most celebrated attack against rhetoric is nearly contemporary with its birth in ancient Greece. It was launched by Plato, who failed to acknowledge the descriptive aspect of rhetoric and condemned what seemed to him a means purely of achieving success. A great many later philosophers followed Plato's lead. The first part of his attack derives from the idea of language developed by Socrates, in the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*: while other elements of the world can be known in themselves, words are mere reflections of these other things; as a consequence, they do not merit our attention. To speak well about bodies, one must be a physician, not a rhetorician. To use laws well, one must know the secrets of justice, not those of judicial discourse.

Plato's second, and principal, argument against rhetoric is based on moral reasoning: through his verbal skill, the rhetorician claims he can successfully champion any cause, just or unjust. Socrates condemns this technique, which makes a mockery of justice and favors success over goodness. If the lawyer succeeds because he has spoken well and not because he has defended truth, isn't that immoral? Socrates prefers to lose but keep his virtue.

It is relatively easy to parry the first part of the attack. Without claiming that knowledge of language leads to, or can replace, knowledge of things, we can say that language, after all, is also a thing, an element of the world, and that it, too, deserves to be known for itself. Thus at least the descriptive aspect of rhetoric is salvaged. This aspect has been effectively taken up (for good or ill) by a variety of paralinguistic disciplines: by stylistics, by the analysis of discourse, and, most recently, by pragmatics, which re-examines today, with increasing precision, the problems that rhetoric posed in former times, from the definition of metaphors to the analysis of jokes.

But this rather obvious counterthrust is useless against the second Socratic accusation, that rhetoric is immoral. Nor is it more useful to summarize the fallacious arguments that stud Socrates' discourse in the *Gorgias*, as Vickers does. Even if these arguments sometimes border on bad faith, the reproach itself retains its full force (unless you claim to be indifferent to good and evil). This is why appeal has to be made, as Vickers understands, to an entirely different sort of counterargument, which refers to an intrinsic connection between the flowering of eloquence (and of rhetoric) on the one hand, and the flowering of democracy on the other.

RHETORIC WAS born, indeed, in Syracuse and Athens, alongside democracy; and it declined under the Caesars in Rome. In his *Dialogue on Orators*, Tacitus sought to explain why this temporal coincidence was also a causal relation. Eloquence is needed if political decisions are made in the forum, following an open debate. It is not needed if the ruler decides everything on his own. Plato's animosity toward eloquence, and toward its discipline, rhetoric, was therefore merely a part of his well-known campaign against democracy.

Unfortunately for Tacitus, this argument does not stand up under scrutiny. As anyone can see, in the past or in the present, the cult of effective speech is not a prerogative of democracies. Tyrants have not deprived themselves of so powerful a weapon as skillful propaganda. Goebbels was well acquainted with it, as was Vyshinski, whose accusatory speeches in Stalin's show trials turned out to be quite effective. There is a hope, which is periodically reborn in European history, that beauty will lead by itself to good (Quintillian, the last great Latin rhetorician, said that he who speaks with eloquence must be a virtuous man), and innumerable proofs to the contrary seem not to touch this hope. Plato may have rejected rhetoric because it was linked in his mind to democracy, but that is not sufficient to clear rhetoric of all suspicion.

How, then, can eloquence be defended? We can use Aristotle's method, which is not so different, at bottom, from that of Gorgias himself in Plato's dialogue. It means regarding rhetoric as a pure technique that facilitates, through speech, the achievement of a set goal—and thus excludes the category of moral judgment, to which, nonetheless, the goals in question will be readily submitted. Not the instrument, but the man who uses it injudiciously, is to blame. (Responsibility for the deaths at Nagasaki must lie not with the scientists who discovered atomic fission, but with the government that decided to drop the bomb.) Rhetoric can also be used in the service of good, as all those who believed they possessed its secret, from Plato himself to Bossuet and others, have not failed to do.

That would be a minimal defense of rhetoric, on which we could all agree. But we must ask ourselves, in addition, whether certain kinds of discourse, by their very form, and independently of the particular goals they serve, are not consonant with the democratic project. To pursue this line of inquiry would naturally require making a distinction between forms of discourse—an effort for which Plato felt only repugnance, like all maximalists who prefer to see everything as black or white. Such an inquiry would allow us to set aside not only totalitarian eloquence, but also many other kinds of fine language that, while not as odious as the rhetoric of Goebbels or Vyshinski, contribute nothing to democracy. We might mention, for example, the discourse of seduction, which tries to captivate the reader rather than make him think, and even prefers to stun him with enigmatic words. Or the discourse of passion: What does a vibrant declaration of love have to do with the rules of democracy?

IF A discourse does exist whose form itself has affinity with the democratic idea, it can be only debate, in which we aspire, with the help of rational arguments, to discover truth (which is, after all, the principle of the Socratic dialogues as well). For the rules of such debate imply the ideas of universality and equality. This is precisely what certain defenders of democracy in antiquity had in mind, a form of government favored by discussion in which anyone's point of view can be expressed, and in which dis-

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tinctions are made between rational and irrational arguments.

The first modern liberals, too, would say as much: good "social communication," wrote Benjamin Constant, leads to "the rectification of all ideas." The form of verbal exchange influences its result. Contemporary philosophers like Karl Popper, Karl O. Apel, and Jürgen Habermas have tried to establish grounds for this affirmation (each with his own significant nuances). The possibility of rational critique is an indispensable condition of democratic life; the political ideal, like the ethical ideal, can be deduced from the premises of reasoned debate. (Curiously, Vickers, who relies on Popper's criticism of Plato, does not mention this philosophical development.) In their written texts, moreover, the authors who subscribe to this ideal adopt a particular style: they lay their cards on the table, they share with the reader all the knowledge at their disposal, they subsequently appeal only to the rational faculties.

Still, it must be added that if rational argumentation participates in the democratic spirit, that spirit in itself does not lead to reasoned debate—far from it. As Plato first observed, democracy is favorable to the flourishing of demagogy as well. Since such a great number of interlocutors are addressed, who cannot be competent in all areas, the seemingly true wins out over the truth, the pleasing over the good, the rousing over the reasonable. The public meetings that were so numerous in the universities in 1968-69, which were, in theory, settings for direct democracy, left this observer with an indelible memory of triumphant demagogy. But today's roundtable discussions and televised debates often give me the same impression; the most skillful carries the day, not the most just. (Written expression, it is true, mitigates many of these disadvantages.)

RHETORIC can be defended against the Platonic critics, even if a few concessions must be made to them. But this first wave of attacks was followed by a second that proved to be still more dangerous. Rhetoric came to a halt, not in the fourth century B.C., but only a century ago. This second assault, which Vickers addresses much less fully, was led not by an individual, but by several generations of writers and artists whom we call conveniently the Romantics. Romanticism was "war on rhetoric," as Hugo would say.

This campaign was waged on entirely different ground. Plato reproached rhet-

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Saudi Arabia

Does it support America's interests in the area?

Since the fall of the Shah and the great upheaval in Iran, we seem to have designated Saudi Arabia as our "ally", a country whose policies and goals are supposedly in accord with ours and that can be expected to promote our interests and policies in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf area. And Saudi Arabia is generally referred to as a "moderate Arab" nation.

What are the facts?

■ In the 1920's, American exploration firms discovered the world's largest oil fields under the eastern Saudi desert. As a result, the Saudis and their small neighbors became the richest nations in the world, far surpassing in per-capita product and income long established industrial nations. Not content with this enormous wealth, the Saudis spearheaded the creation of OPEC. It is a price-fixing cartel, which would be totally illegal under U.S. anti-trust laws. This cartel has managed to increase the price of oil by more than tenfold. In doing so, the members of OPEC — primarily Saudi Arabia — were able to amass almost unimaginable riches. At the same time, they caused grave economic dislocation to the Western industrial nations and brought ruin and famine to many of the so-called third world countries.

■ What do the Saudis do with all this wealth? Much of it goes to the maintenance of the most extravagant lifestyle of the Saudi "royal" house and hundreds of "princes" and their hangers-on. Some of it goes for ostentatious public projects. But much of it goes to bankrolling terrorists and troublemakers in the Middle East and in the rest of the world. For example, Saudi Arabia is the main support of the terrorist PLO, which would financially collapse were it not for Saudi Arabian aid. Saudi Arabia finances Syria to the tune of $750 million per year. Syria is a close ally of the Soviet Union, a state based on terror, and a sworn enemy of the U.S.

■ The Saudis have participated in every one of the Arab wars against Israel, since Israel's founding in 1948. They are totally committed to continued warfare until what they hope will be the destruction of Israel and "recovery" of Jerusalem. Saudi Arabia has systematically thwarted any peace initiatives to resolve the Arab-Israel conflict, continues to maintain a state of war with Israel, refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist, and perpetuates, through the Arab League boycott, an international economic warfare intended to strangle Israel.

■ The Saudis clamor constantly for more and more sophisticated weapons from the U.S. They claim to need these weapons in order to protect their kingdom, their oil installations, and the Gulf shipping lanes from the Iranians. They have purchased $2.9 billion of war materials from the U.S. and vast additional quantities from western Europe. But now that this arsenal is available and could be engaged, do they use it? Of course not! They call on the U.S. for help.

■ Because of their unwillingness to assist in their own defense during the Gulf war, we had to put over thirty war ships and much other material in the area and thousands of U.S. sailors, whose lives were at risk and quite a few of whom were lost. Why, then, if they refuse to defend their own country, do the Saudis need all this expensive and deadly hardware? To quote the Saudi defense minister: "It is focused on Israel." And he was echoing King Khaled, who said: "When we build our military power, we have no designs on anybody except those who took away our land and holy places in Jerusalem, and we know who they are!" The way things seem to be planned by the Saudis, it may not be too long before their F-15's will join Syria's MIG 29's (also bought with Saudi money) to fight Israel's F-15's in another devastating Middle East conflagration.

■ Are the Saudis grateful to the U.S. for being so generous with protection? Despite the fact that the U.S. Navy was and still is in the Gulf for their protection, the Saudis have steadfastly refused to put any of their installations and bases at the disposal of the U.S. The cost to the U.S. taxpayer is a minimum of $200 million so far. Will the Saudis pick up any of that tab? Of course not! When the Iraqi fighter plane attacked the "Stark" and killed 36 American sailors, the U.S. urged the Saudis to pursue the Iraqui plane and to bring it down if necessary. What did the Saudis do? They flatly refused!

Saudi Arabia is not "moderate". It bankrolls Syria — the Soviet Union's ally and client state — and is the paymaster of the terrorist PLO. Its arsenal is not destined to the defense of its territory against Iran, but for the next "jihad" — what they hope will be the final war of extermination against Israel. They are no friends of America or of the West. They do not cooperate with us in the defense of our strategic interests — they single-mindedly pursue their own agenda. As to the "oil weapon", they wield it ruthlessly to amass the riches of the world and to disrupt the economies of the West.

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oric for being indifferent to the good and failing to contribute to the search for truth. The Romantics condemned rhetoric because it is composed of rules and norms, and because it favors repetition rather than originality. Romantic ideology values the new and the unique, prefers invention and revolution to submission to rules. Where practical modes of discourse are concerned, the utility of codification may be acknowledged (you can be taught to write newspaper articles or political statements), but these modes of discourse are not granted much prestige. And no place is left for rhetoric in the literary domain when art and literature are considered to occupy the summit of human activities.

The meaning of this new attack is quite different from, quite the opposite of, the earlier one. Whereas rhetoric could be defended against Plato and the philosophers in the name of democratic ideals, it is now rejected precisely in the name of individualist ideology, itself the basis of democracy. The modern individual wants to be autonomous. He questions all norms imposed on him from without, by the force of tradition alone; he wants to find for himself reasons to legitimate one norm or another. A similar movement took shape in all the arts: painting renounced the "norms" of representation, music the norms of classical harmony. Everyone now thinks he has the right to establish his own rules. Under these conditions, rhetoric has no chance to survive.

THERE IS, obviously, something excessive, not to say false, in the Romantic demand. Nobody ever produced absolute novelty. Rules and norms did not really disappear, they simply became unacknowledgeable—which is to nobody's advantage. And so voices were raised, from the very beginnings of Romanticism, calling for a return to rules, and for a rebirth of rhetoric. In *Les fleurs de Tarbes*, a book luminous in detail and obscure as a whole, Jean Paulhan, to take one example among many, described the battle between what he named Terror and Rhetoric, and called for "the invention of a rhetoric." But his project bore the seeds of its own failure. The character of rhetoric is precisely that it is not invented, that it presents itself as a rule imposed from without. Since then, writers from Raymond Queneau to Georges Pérec have tried to oppose the Romantic current by producing works entirely governed by rules decided in advance (and, in this sense, wholly rhetorical). But whatever the success of any given text, the whole project was doomed to failure. As constraining as these rules were, their primary feature was that they were arbitrarily chosen by their authors, which immediately made them different from rhetorical rules.

Such is the impasse to which individualist ideology has brought modern art (and other activities as well): it cannot do without rules, without references, norms, and a common language, and at the same time it cannot accept them, for they are contrary to the aspiration to individual autonomy. A particular artist can decide, of course, to submit to a tradition, but the very fact that he can choose between several traditions (to paint in the style of Greek icons, or Indian miniatures, or Japanese Zen drawings) gives his gesture an arbitrary character, and makes it something quite other than a traditional painting. This is why, desirable as the rebirth of rhetoric might seem, salutary as the acknowledgment of common rules for the game at hand might be, I fear that, Vickers's appeal notwithstanding, this will not come about soon.

TZVETAN TODOROV

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Veronese's profound surfaces.

BRUSH FIRE

BY DAVID ROSAND

PAOLO VERONESE, who died 400 years ago, is all too easy to love: for the colorful splendor of his canvases, for the virtuoso display of his brushwork, for the apparently untroubled psychology of his majestic figures. Unlike Titian and Tintoretto, his Venetian contemporaries, the master from Verona has not made heavy emotional demands upon his admirers. He satisfies, instead, our simplest hedonist instincts. Delighting in the chromatic sensuousness of their own surfaces, of the actual paint as well as the imitated stuffs, Veronese's paintings have seemed models of the decorative. And yet the more perceptive critics of the past recognized in that fundamental superficiality a profundity of artistic meaning; in the expansive splendor of those compositions, in their spaciousness of setting and magnanimity of gesture, they detected a genuine generosity of spirit.

In the 17th century, Marco Boschini, the most responsive and intelligent voice in the Venetian critical tradition, declared Veronese to be the "Treasurer of Painting," whose brush joyously embellished the world. Celebrating the painter's art, Boschini's baroque rhetoric intended to pay full tribute to the special power of that brush; he was sensitive to the particular characteristics of independent strokes carrying and shaping individual touches of pure color—"as though they were pearls, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, diamonds, and the most precious jewels of the Orient."

Two centuries later another critic, of rather different sensibility, responded to those same surfaces, taking delight in their frank opulence of color. As he stood before that bejeweled pictorial world, in the Turin gallery in 1858, John Ruskin converted to life. After having attended the gloomy sermon of a Waldensian preacher, whose deformed ugliness he duly noted, Ruskin was, while copying a figure from a painting by Veronese,

The Art of Paolo Veronese 1528-1588
National Gallery of Art
catalog by W. R. Rearick
with an introductory essay by Terisio Pignatti
(Cambridge University Press, 212 pp., $34.95, $19.95 paper)

David Rosand, professor of art history at Columbia University, is the author of *Painting in Cinquecento Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto* (Yale University Press).

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"struck by the Gorgeousness of life which the world seems to be constituted to develop." Emancipating himself from the dark Evangelism of his upbringing, the Englishman found a new life in and through the painting of "this mighty Paul Veronese, in whose soul there is a strength as of the snowy mountains, and within whose brain all the pomp and majesty of humanity floats in a marshalled glory."

Veronese has always been something of a painter's painter. His greatest followers were not his own immediate heirs, but rather those later artists who came to study the chromatic structures and grand gestures of his paintings. Rubens, above all, learned about the intimate correspondence of color and brushstroke from him, about the articulation of color and the consubstantiality of pigment and imitated material. To Veronese is owed the second flowering of the Venetian pictorial tradition in the 18th century, its crescendo in the art of Tiepolo. And Delacroix, who celebrated Veronese as "the *ne plus ultra* of rendering" and who searched his paintings for their transparency of shadow, confirmed the continuing validity of the older master's chromatic structures in his own painting.

If modern scholarship on Veronese hardly hints at the pictorial power capable of inspiring such enthusiasm, the current exhibition at the National Gallery of Art offers modern viewers the opportunity to judge this undervalued painter directly. This is the third, and certainly the most ambitious, of the exhibitions organized to celebrate this anniversary year (the other two were, appropriately, in Venice and Verona). Forty-nine paintings in Washington survey Veronese's development, from his early years in Verona to the moving altarpieces for the church of San Pantalon in Venice, commissioned the year before the artist's death. In addition, and just as impressive, a series of 55 drawings documents the full range of Veronese's achievement as a draftsman, confirming his status as the most purely talented of the Venetians.

The drawings, indeed, establish the terms in which Veronese's art in general can be approached and best appreciated, especially the chiaroscuro drawings. These magnificently realized designs—drawn in ink, with pen over black chalk or with the point of the brush, and wash, and heightened with opaque white paint—introduce us to the quintessential aspect of Veronese's pictorial sensibility: the touch of his brush. The paper of these drawings is invariably prepared, specially covered with a grayish tone, varying in tint from blue to mauve to green, and apparently burnished to a hard finish. This substantial ground then serves as the base for linear structures that are especially impressive for their combination of secure control and, in the white heightening, tactile expressiveness. In that brushwork, nervous yet always responsive to its mimetic responsibility, we encounter a constant of Veronese's art. The series opens with an early example of such a drawing, *Nature Divinities in a Landscape*, which W. R. Rearick, curator of the exhibition and author of its catalog, brings to public attention for the first time.

THE DREAM OF SAINT HELEN, 1580-1581

The function of these drawings varied. Some were clearly intended as *modelli*, compositions presented to patrons—such as *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, a drawing in the Louvre for an altarpiece now in Caen, but painted by the 24-year-old Veronese in 1552 for the new cathedral of Mantua. (Rearick's catalog entry would deny its preparatory relationship to the painting.) More generally, Veronese used the medium to explore compositional possibilities, creating variations on themes and testing new inventions. These chiaroscuro drawings maintain a high level of finish, as complete works of art. Pictorial rather than graphic, they relate directly to Veronese's painting in the dominance of their fluid brushwork.

A similar fluidity marks Veronese's penmanship. His figure and compositional studies in pen run freely across the paper, figure flowing into figure. The wash he applies, ostensibly to pick out and define form, imposes as often a large order of unity on the full sheet. Few other draftsmen of the Renaissance so transform scattered sketches, often penned on the backs of letters or other casual papers, into such satisfying wholes. And again, it is the brush that carries such ultimate pictorial responsibility. Like the white paint that gives structural substance to the chiaroscuro drawings, the wash of the pen drawings flows over the surface. In both cases, relative density or dilution of material—paint or ink—may inflect the quality of reference, but the essential effect remains, in a strict sense, superficial, riding across and patterning the surface of the paper. It is in this sense, in its superfici-

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ality, that Veronese's drawing may be said to epitomize his art: the mark of a restless hand in perpetual yet always varied motion, enjoying its own freedom yet functioning as representation. This hand is never merely self-indulgent.

It is the way in which the brush adheres to the surface that distinguishes Veronese's painting as well, the degree to which it carries its referential responsibility. Special to his art is the intimate rapport between the brush and its chromatic charge. Touch and color inform each other, the very shape and direction of the stroke giving substance to the pigment itself. The energies of the brush remain obedient to representational control, to their mimetic function, without sacrificing, however, the inspiring vitality of the gesture that enables such obedience.

DRAPERIES, in particular, become the occasion for testing these relationships. In establishing their materiality, Veronese's brush finds its natural freedom in the shimmer of highlight as it glides along a crest of fold. Its course varied by inflected pressure, it passes precariously along a frontier between the fiction it creates and the actuality of its own painterly substance—as well as that of the woven canvas ground. Similar observations might be made of painting by Titian or Tintoretto, but they, in different ways, permitted a more obvious independence to the stroke, and hence to the reality of painting. Neither of Veronese's contemporaries maintained that precious balance; neither so rigorously controlled the energies of the brush.

If we respond to the creative tension between surface mark and represented reference, we become even more aware of a special relation between touch and color, which are at once identical and yet distinct. Veronese's great achievement as colorist lies in that initial identity: color is shaped pigment. It attains substance through the brush stroke, and as the stroke affirms its independence, so does color. As a fabric of juxtaposed and overlapping gestures of the brush, the painting is a chromatic tissue, woven of distinct strands of color. There is something truly remarkable in this, something that makes us wonder at the complex effects of simple structures, for Veronese's painting technique is fundamentally straightforward: everything is available on the surface. For most of his career, Veronese achieved his chromatic clarity by working on a fairly light ground. Colors maintain their integrity; they tend not to submerge themselves into an ambient shadow, as in the paintings of Titian and Tintoretto, which are constructed on a darker base. Veronese paints in pure color, not in tone, creating form through chromatic juxtaposition.

The brush stroke of Veronese stands as his signature, more than any inscribed name; it is the individual sign of the artist, surety to the autograph execution. At the National Gallery show, it also indicts a number of the paintings as products of the studio—despite their presentation as autograph works by Veronese himself. Like most painters in Venice, Veronese was the master of a large commercial enterprise, a family workshop in which his chief assistants were his brother Benedetto and, eventually, his sons Gabriele and Carletto Caliari; and there were others who served their apprenticeships in the Veronese shop, assisting in its large-scale production. All were trained to paint in the manner of the master, to submit whatever independent artistic personalities they may have had to the controlling style of the head of the firm.

Their responsibility for several of the canvases in Washington is revealed precisely in the ambition to replicate the brushwork of Veronese himself, and in their failure to do so with conviction. It is rather like trying to imitate the handwriting of another. They fail on several counts. The strokes themselves, gestures copied, not invented, lack the sense of internally generated energy that charges those of the master. Lacking, too, is that particular congruence, that balanced tension between painted sign and represented object.

BUT THESE are quibbles. Rearick has assembled a large group of truly magnificent pictures, which well represent the genius of this painter. The chromatic and tactile sensibility that is key to that genius, evident in the earliest works in the exhibition, displays its versatility as it shifts from a delicately feminine mode (in a series of allegorical figures from about 1550-51) to one powerfully masculine (*The Temptation of Saint Anthony* of 1552). Although to some extent Veronese's figures do grow in breadth and stature as his style develops, his basic figure types are established early: young women who will mature from lithe Parmigianesque elegance to a graver beauty; heroic males, inspired by the sculpture of Jacopo San Sevino, who are conceived with proportions already beyond those of youth. The fuller evolution of his art is better gauged in the increasing profundity of his brushwork.

When a painting by Veronese takes full effect, the viewer is drawn toward its surface structures. In *The Dream of Saint Helen* from the Vatican Museums, to take one of the most impressive canvases in the exhibition, we find ourselves involved in pictorial patterning on several scales. Enthroned before an elaborately foliate backdrop of gilded leather, the mother of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, dreams her vision of the true cross—here dragged before her closed eyes by a small angel. The swirling patterns of that backcloth echo those of Helen's red cloak and of the design, damasked in golds and greens, that articulates her white dress. Around and almost emanating from the quiet center of her resting head, this expansive linear activity becomes the visual correlative of her inner state.

That activity, a web of printed patterns and inflected brushwork, asserts its own special interest, and we attend with pleasure to the intricacies of textile design and paint application. Our involvement with the image, with its thematic core, is a function of our involvement with its painterly construction. The gentle profundity we sense is in some basic way a function of Veronese's delicate treatment of shadows, especially within the thick folds of the saint's garments. What is so particularly remarkable here, and what so distinguishes Veronese, is the light within the shadow. Over the white forms of heavy cloth, Veronese creates a tonal depth by the use of glaze, a translucent layer of oil tinted by a little black pigment that yields light from its own depth. The transparency of these shadows evokes, despite the differences in paint structure, the shadows of Monet, who also sought within shadow, albeit an opaque pigment, light and color.

IN THE last decade or so of his career, Veronese adapted his chromatic style to new, more Venetian conditions. Responding to the examples of Titian and Tintoretto, and especially Jacopo Bassano, he darkened the ground on which he worked, forcing his pure colors to operate under new circumstances. Riding less independently on the surface, they now emerge from a background darkness, carrying with them the illuminated substance of their forms. The nocturnal setting of the *Agony in the Garden*, a small canvas from the Brera in Milan, offers

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the perfect situation for such effect. Here light and color struggle against the darkness, itself (despite the poor condition of the picture) a rich construct of deep blues and greens on browns, the very metaphor of Jesus' own agony.

In the *Dead Christ Supported by the Virgin and an Angel*, from the Hermitage in Leningrad, Christ's body slides forward from the enveloping gloom of the background, the slow revelation of his body controlled by delicately glazed shadow across his substantial flesh. That strict control of mimetic function continues to serve Veronese, but with an increasingly pathetic eloquence. Modern critics have complained about the lack of pathos in Veronese's treatment of religious themes—a misreading, certainly, of the rhetorical aims of his art. One can hardly fail to respond to the affective power of these later works, as shadow gives new conviction to color. And yet even in the very last works, like the *Miracle of Saint Pantaleon*, that referential balance of the brushwork, and hence of color, continues to play a central role in the pictorial operation. Materiality of pigment, embodied in the stroke itself, miraculously translates into a new reality.

FROM VERONESE'S painting we learn much about painting as an art, about its techniques and possibilities. And not only from his painting. In 1573 he was called before the Inquisition to answer charges of impropriety in a vast tableau of the Last Supper, which included soldiers and dwarfs and other things presumably extraneous to the subject. In his defense, he adduced the size of the picture and defended the decorum of his solution: they are there "for ornament, as is customary . . . if in a picture there is extra space, I enrich it with figures according to the subject." There is nothing indecorous in his painting, he insisted. In a rare comment by a Renaissance painter, he explained the meaning of his compositional structure, twice observing that the objectionable figures are not in the same space of Our Lord. He articulated the concept of a sacred space, the space reserved for Christ that so clearly dominates the canvas, now in the Accademia in Venice—which, in deference to the Inquisitors, he retitled the *Feast in the House of Levi*. Veronese's answers make explicit and consistent reference to his profession and to his art: "We painters assume the same license as do poets and madmen," he explained. The artist's words cannot be dismissed as merely disingenuous, a frightened response to the Inquisition; consistently intelligent and relevant, they make perfect critical sense as statements about the art of painting.

Perhaps no critic took as full a measure of Veronese as did Ruskin, who saw in him the true precursor to Turner the colorist. Setting a high moral as well as aesthetic standard, Ruskin guides us to the proper level of expectation when he speaks of the "general character of the mind of Veronese": "capable of tragic power to the utmost, if he chooses to exert it in that direction, but, by habitual preference, exquisitely graceful and playful; religious without severity, and winningly noble; delighting in slight, sweet, everyday incident, but hiding deep meanings underneath it; rarely painting a gloomy subject, and never a base one." Surveying the work of this great painter at the National Gallery, we understand Ruskin's enthusiasm and, responding to the paintings ourselves, we can only share it.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

that the kit—which contained condoms and other preventative paraphernalia—was one of the first in the country distributed by a college administration to address the spread of the AIDS virus.

ESTHER SCHRADER
Los Angeles, California

CANADIAN CLUB

To the editors:

Canadians, "humorless"? TRB's perception of us ("Come to Uncle," December 12) is as bogus as a Nelson Eddy-Jeanette MacDonald backdrop. Get hip! Every life form in the solar system except TRB knows we're positively madcap. Even in that epicenter of mirth, Washington, Ambassador Gotlieb and his irrepressible wife, Sandra, are renowned as the shindig king and queen. According to Canadian school textbooks, we pioneered the tequila shot, Mazola Twister, and lampshade headwear. Hell, your First Lady just says "No"; Maggie Trudeau not only said "Absolutely," she also got busted for possession. We may be your "neurotic" neighbors, but we're at least a lot of fun to live next to, eh?

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Big Watermelon

HE'S TANNED. He's rested. He's ready. So went the California bumper sticker warning that we would soon have Unindicted Co-conspirator Richard Nixon to kick around again. This should come as no surprise. First it was those dense books reminding us that he went to China. Then those informal dinners in Saddle River, New Jersey, where even the toasts were written out ahead of time on yellow legal pads. Then it was a column in the London *Sunday Times*, featuring predictions such as: Jesse Jackson will not be the next president. After that, he creates his own photo-op in front of Vice President-elect Dan Quayle's transition headquarters and, in words reminiscent of his memorable "I am not a crook" speech, swears that Quayle is not an intellectual midget. Now comes the capstone of the Nixon comeback: his inclusion as a guest at the intimate reception before the reception for the Gorbachevs at the United Nations. Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter weren't there. Resign in disgrace, dine in favor.

RONALD REAGAN IS now heard to complain of the "iron triangle," and in particular of the press and government being too cozy with one another. Yet in the Reagan era the reporters most likely to get interviews were the ones who spent much of their time blowing kisses to people in power. Consider demi-journalist Barbara Walters, who switches from reporter to celebrity guest at whim. Several weeks ago, during the Gorbachev visit, she was in her guise as a member of the Ladies who Lunch, a New York-ey breed known largely by their designer and restaurant affiliations—Nan Kemper at Mortimer's in a Galanos, Pat Buckley at Le Cirque in a Bill Blass. There she was (Barbara Walters at the U.N. secretary's Sutton Place home in a Chanel) making small talk over the croque aux oeufs pochés with the Soviet First Lady—the only reporter invited. Now who do you think will get the first on-the-sofa interview with the Gorbachevs, asking Raisa if she were a tree, what kind of tree she would be? And before Nancy has finished rearranging the Galanoses and Adolfos in her Bel Air closet, who will be asking the Bushes whether they sleep in single or double beds?

I WENT TO visit one of George Bush's thousand points of light three weeks ago bearing blankets and canned goods collected in the neighborhood. I was hoping to play Lady Bountiful for a moment but instead I got a look at Yuppie Philanthropy in action. All around were people like myself thirsting for a seasonal fix, reassurance that their lives of wretched excess and self-absorption had not drained them of all mercy. Soup-kitchen turns as a way of making reparations aren't to be discouraged just because they make yuppies feel good. They are better than nothing at all. But as you see leather-bound datebooks being pulled out to make lunch dates, and overhear conversations about the best frequent flier programs, you know how slim Bush's vision thing really is. The light of those to whom much has been given is a low-wattage bulb at best; it's no substitute for government programs to feed and clothe and house people.

THE MOST DISGUSTING gift this Christmas was put together by a former Reagan administration consultant and Republican candidate for Congress, Myron McKee. Modeled after Monopoly and selling for $29.95, Home Rulette asks the board game question: What happens when a coalition of welfare entrepreneurs, black supremacists, radical homosexuals, and common criminals takes over the local government of the capital city of a modern superpower? Moves include "harass honkeys" "flim-flam the Feds," and "spread a fatal social disease." Mayor Marion Barry deserves almost anything he gets, but not having the District Building called the "Big Watermelon." In the year of Morton Downey and trash television, is it any surprise that the game sold out in hotel lobbies and Georgetown stores?

I WAS ATTENDING to my fifth greatest fear in life—fear of insufficient reading material—at La Guardia last week and was appalled at all the magazines designed to drive women crazy: *New Woman*, *Working Woman*, *New York Woman*, *Self*, *Savvy*, *Lear's*, and that turncoat *Ms.*, which might as well call itself Miss, make that Mademoiselle. These magazines are all fighting the last war. Men's magazines talk about luxury equipment (all male hobbies require gear; fish poachers didn't become popular until men thought for a few minutes that cooking might be fun), and instruct men on how to beat their best friend in sport, money, and love. Women's magazines are still bemoaning the fact that men have it better than women do, while telling women how to be better people—more generous, more accomplished, more attractive, smarter, funnier—and more relaxed. Only the part about being more relaxed should be taken seriously. It's true that men are still at the top of their professions—senior partners in law firms, seven-figure dealmakers in investment banking, editors at magazines (check this masthead). Many women are annoyed by this, especially on payday. But—and here comes heresy in the sisterhood—women do have a pretty good deal, better than men in many ways. Now, any woman who wants to give up all pleasures save work—slaving round-the-clock for three weeks closing the RJR megadeal, for example—has the chance to do so. But many women have decided to give up having the top jobs, the ones that require singleminded, night and day sourpuss devotion to an institution, in favor of having a life outside of the office. This may sound like status quo ante, but it's not. We are no longer kept out of satisfying, engaging work; there are fewer Phi Beta Kappas running around the mailroom, fetching coffee, working for men not as smart as they are.

BUT MEN ARE still kind of stuck where they were when feminism began three decades ago, in their suits and briefcases, worried about the next rung on the ladder. Few seem able to find the satisfaction hidden in the drudgery that is child-raising. I get blank stares from even the most Phil Donahue-ish types when I talk about the fun to be had in staying home with a sick child carrying tea and toast on a tray, putting together the Map of the States puzzle ten times in a row. It may be bad for the women's mag business, but I say let men be a little more equal than women in the world of desks and paper clips. Someday they may covet our work as much as we coveted theirs. And then we will be sorry.

MARGARET CARLSON

Margaret Carlson is a senior writer at *Time*.

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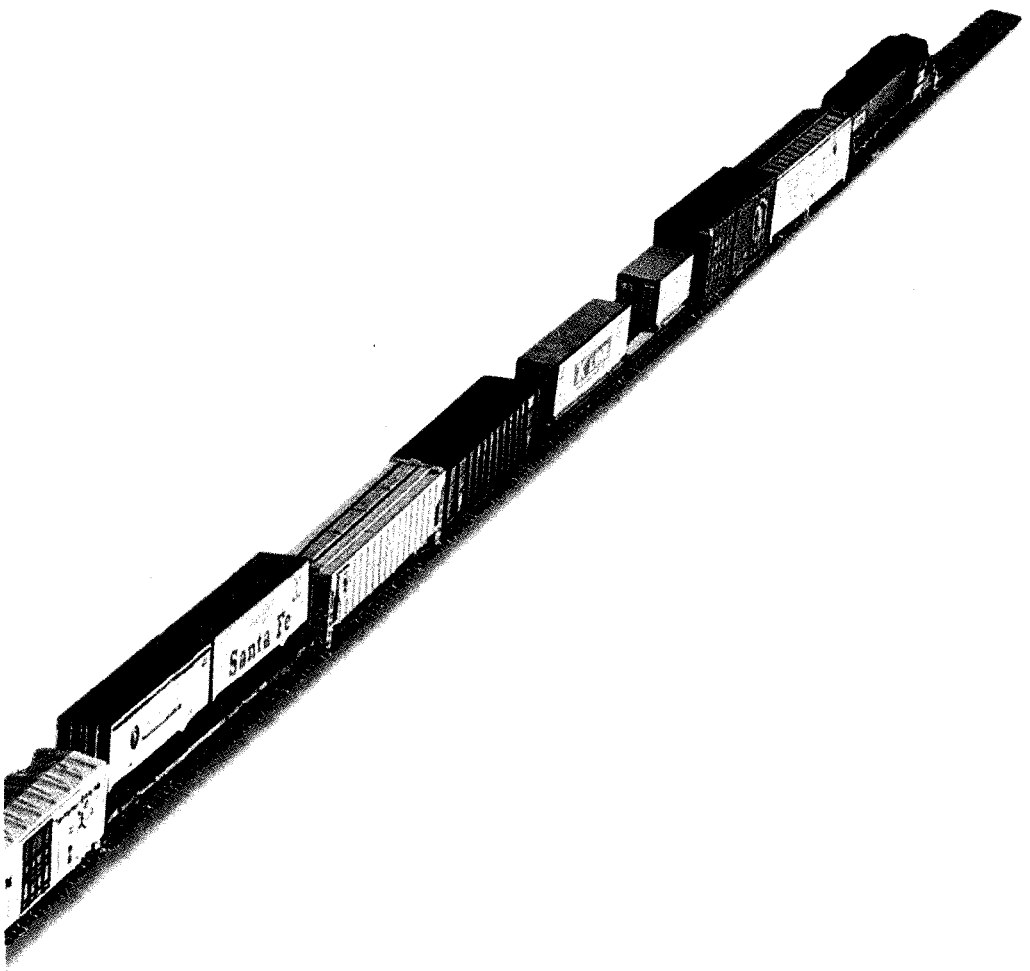

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